

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### **Tensions and dilemmas caused by organizational change: The study of the Greek Young Women's Christian Association case**

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**Tensions and dilemmas caused by organizational change:**

**The study of the Greek Young Women's Christian Association case**

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the opinions of volunteers at local level when change is driven by the perceived needs of a voluntary organization's central body.

The case study of the Greek YWCA is the adopted research design to provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon of organizational change within the voluntary sector. By employing the principal qualitative method of interviewing and the supplementary methods of the analysis of organizational documents, life documents and research observations, this study examines the processes that volunteers employ in order to adapt or resist to change.

Taking into consideration the new professional standards required by the World YWCA and the contracting of the Greek welfare state, the research findings reveal that opinions of the Greek YWCA volunteers do not coincide with the new orientation of the World YWCA and that the declining number of registered volunteers is linked to the lack of answers to women's contemporary challenges. The theorizing of organizational change by referring solely to professional innovations in the voluntary sector on the one hand, and to the implementation of strategies for the establishment of these innovations on the other hand, does not extensively explain the explicit reasons lying behind organizational change within the voluntary sector.

The collective identities or framing theory, that stresses the importance of the common culture that social movements' members share, is used as the theoretical framework that presents and explains the model reflecting the actual changes taking place within the Greek YWCA.

A new definition of organizational change is proposed: Organizational change in the voluntary sector is the contribution of volunteers' collective identity to the transformation of a voluntary organization. This definition stresses the distinctiveness of voluntary organizations by considering the importance of volunteers' experiences, values and beliefs in the promotion of organizational change.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. The general nature and scope of the thesis**

The role of the voluntary sector in Greece has never been as important as it is today. The financial crisis that threatens the economic stability of the country brought forward the important role of voluntary organisations, since the structural changes that constitute the primary effects of this crisis include the diminishing role of the state in the provision of social goods and services. Matters of financial conformity to stipulations of the International Monetary Fund and to the European Union are accompanied by the acknowledged inability of the Greek state to deliver the demanded quality and amount of social services. In addition the demand for these services started rising at a dramatic rate since the consequences of unemployment, of poverty and of social exclusion are affecting a large part of the Greek population.

The contemporary challenges of voluntary organisations in Greece include the delivery of good quality social services in an efficient and responsible way, the creation of partnerships and co-operation with other non-governmental organisations and the state, and finally adaptation to the new standards and needs of Greek society. Greek society is changing and, therefore, voluntary organisations need to adapt to these changes too. The voluntary sector acquires also in Greece a more concrete definition within the evolution of civil society and one of its main purposes is to invest in social capital and bring in new voices and new groups (Harris, 2001:220) as well as their needs and claims. Among the most known voluntary organisations, which according to their organisational mission undertake the responsibility to be

responsive to the challenges of contemporary Greek society and to the needs of women, is the Young Women's Christian Association.

The Greek YWCA was founded by young refugee women, who were expatriated from Asia Minor in 1923. The need for urgent migration services was the reason that these women gathered and formed the association. During the following years and until today, the association trained volunteers to offer a variety of useful programs of action and information- in the fields of lifelong learning, vocational training, health, third-world issues- as well as social services to women of all ages. The Greek YWCA is a long established organisation that has maintained its existence due to the preservation of its organisational mission: to help all women regardless of their status and religious belief. The Greek YWCA is a member of the World YWCA, an international non-governmental organisation established in 1894 and based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Greek YWCA links today twenty-seven local associations throughout Greece. Every year, representatives from all twenty-seven associations meet in order to discuss priorities and the programs of the Greek YWCA, to receive special training for the implementation of the organisation's programs, and to express their views and problems. The current organisation is confronting new challenges that demand the adaption of extended innovation and drastic operational changes. Either as an affiliated member of the World YWCA, or as a Greek voluntary association, the Greek YWCA seeks to become more professional, transparent and accountable in order to ensure its future existence within the Greek society.

In addition, during the recent national council convention (2008), the organisation stressed the need to produce new programs of action that will take into consideration the empowerment of existing members and the education of new volunteers. The organisation highlighted the essential need to attract and retain new

volunteers and additionally underlined its role as a main actor in the task of supporting and fostering the notion of civil society in Greece; throughout the years of its existence the organisation has been reflecting upon the usefulness of an empowered civil society that could find solutions to emerging social problems. However, the last decade's YWCA local centres' yearly reports that referred to a generalized decline of the voluntary workforce puzzled the volunteers of the Greek YWCA who expressed their willingness to search for ways in which the existing social capital of women could bloom into civic action and attract new volunteers.

This case study envisages developing a new definition of change. The new definition will acknowledge the existing challenges that force voluntary organisations to change as well as the important role of the volunteers' perceptions and experiences.

## 1.2. The distinctiveness of organisational change within the voluntary sector

Anheier (2000:2) argues that because the nature of non-profit organisations is not well-understood, the management of such organisations is often "ill understood" and "ill conceived" as it is based on inaccurate assumptions of how non-profit organisations function. Organisational changes, according to the practices adopted by governmental and business sectors, are often criticized by voluntary organisations. Change cannot be imposed according to bureaucratic and conformity practices as non-profit organisations rely on the work of the individual. (Young, 1989:111).

Wilson (1996:80-81) challenges the adoption of management practices from the business sector when addressing the challenge of change in the voluntary sector. He argues that business strategies concentrate mainly on changes in the organisation's external environment by emphasizing the need for professional management and

organisational decentralization. In addition, he claims that the adoption of competitive strategies can lead to high levels of dependence from funders and jeopardize the existence of smaller agencies not able to adapt to the high standards set by other larger competitive organisations. Wilson (1996:89-95) proposes two alternative ways; organisational learning and co-operation. Organisational learning, he argues, is an essential practice for the survival of voluntary organisations since it can provide useful supporting material for new technologies, new funding strategies, increasing demand for greater accountability, increasing expectations from voluntary associations and collaboration with government and business sectors. Co-operation is Wilson's second alternative to the challenge of change. Yeo (2002:15) examines the future potential of co-operative forms of organisations and suggests that they are a successful alternative to the old approaches of community associational organizing and outlines (Yeo, 2002:28) the current agenda on co-operative enterprises that entails answers to the questions of five broad categories; the dilemma of organisations of whether to adopt a market or a public style of operation, the dependence issues from the state, the challenge of independence from the state and the market, the notions of belonging and democracy, and the existence of co-operative enterprises in the social division of labour.

Finally, and in addition to the two aforementioned alternative routes leading to change, past research has focused on the importance of social movements that can promote organisational change in the voluntary sector by mobilizing organisations that are resistant to change (Zald, 2005:160-162). Changes emerge and force organisations to operate in a responsive way. Social movement theories can be applied in the study of organisations and explain why and how organisational conflicts can be mobilized by non-legitimized and bureaucratic insurgencies, and by



mass insurrections (Zald and Berger, 1978:823-861). The influence of the latter is high in organisations that heavily depend on their members. And in the case of voluntary organisations, where members' protest cannot be penalized, mass insurrections or movements can impose organisational change. For example, reactions and anticipated refusals to the commercialization of the voluntary organisations (Eikenburry, 2009:587-589; Mc Donald, 2007:256) can generate conflicts among the members of organisations that consequently can lead to organisational changes. Therefore, social movements can constitute an internal and institutional source of change that focuses on the reaction of their sub-systems to the adoption of external management standards.

### 1.3. The research objective

The limitation of the state's social provisions due to economic constraints can bring voluntary organisations to the crossroads of three major dilemmas (Harris, 2001:220). Thus, there is a need for organisational changes that highlight the necessity of offering quality services in an efficient and accountable way.

The first dilemma concerns the organisational growth linked to practices adopted by business management thinking (Anheier, 2000:1). This rationale can put in jeopardy the mission of an organisation in favour of the economic rationale (Jager and Beyes, 2010:82) and the adoption of advanced technology that requires a parallel effort in order to sustain the organisational values (Burt and Taylor, 2003:115-126).

The second dilemma concerns the alternative funding opportunities and the challenge of how to take advantage of them. Voluntary organisations face continuous

pressure to prove that they are effective and efficient. Carman (2010:256-270) tests the theory of change behind the accountability movement and concludes that performance evaluation does not necessarily help non-profit organisations to be more effective and efficient. Accountability expectations by funders do not always coincide with the actual efficiency results of organisations. Moreover, the interdependence of voluntary, government and market sectors raises the challenges of addressing society's service needs by improving their managerial efficiency and effectiveness. However, the nature of effectiveness of voluntary organisations does not resemble that of other organisations; therefore the efficiency of voluntary organisations is often negatively criticized (Ostrower, 2007).

The third dilemma illustrates the external forces of collaboration and competition. Factors affecting competitiveness are demographic shifts, the moves towards information and service based economies, changing values, macro-political reconstructing and volatile world economies (Wilson, 1996:85-86). Collaboration is motivated by economic and cultural globalization, the increasing complexity of political and economic emergencies and the consequent transformation of co-operation that the above trends generate (Edwards, Hulme and Wallace, 1999:117-136).

This study adds a fourth dilemma that concerns the volunteers' perceptions and expectations from the voluntary organisations. This research argues that the missing ingredient of the theory of organisational change in the voluntary sector is the consideration of the volunteers' voices and standpoints, that voluntary organisations fail to hear and meet; voices and standpoints that can promote organisational changes.

**The objective of this thesis is to explore the views and perceptions of volunteers on the problem of the international driven need for organisational change at a local level and with particular reference to the Greek YWCA, and with the view to creating a model and offering a definition explaining why change is particular in a voluntary organisation.**

The definition of organisational change proposed in this thesis combines the thematic material drawn from organisational learning and social movements' theories. In particular, the collective identities or framing theory (Melucci, 1989; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996; Steinberg, M. W. 1998; Benford and Snow, 2000 Poletta and Jasper, 2001; Ryan and Gamson, 2006) is used as the theoretical framework that presents and explains the model that reflects the actual changes that are taking place within the Greek YWCA. This theory explains the social movements' emergence according to the common culture that the movements' members share. The culture of the members, which is the collection of beliefs, values and ideologies, is argued to influence both the illustration of a problem's significance and the highlighting of the ways in which a problem may be overcome. In the case of the Greek YWCA and in the light of a new definition of change, this thesis describes the contemporary cultural identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce, analyses the volunteers' views about the organisational change issues set forth by the headquarters' policies of the Greek and the World YWCA, and highlights the ways by which volunteers perceive the overcoming of the organisational change processes. Thus it adds to the collective identities or framing theory in the following way: it develops a new definition of change within the voluntary sector by examining the contribution made by the volunteers' collective identity to the transformation of an organisation.

#### 1.4. The research methodology

Initial research for this work started with the tentative title: “Organisational Change in the Voluntary Sector”. However, the existing literature on organisational change in the voluntary sector did not provide sufficient information about the role of the voluntary workforce in the promotion of change in a voluntary organisation. Therefore, the case study of an organisation was decided as the adoptive research design that could provide insights in the phenomenon of change and describe the tensions and dilemmas arising from the international and national set of expectations of the Greek YWCA. The methodology of carrying out exploratory case study refers mainly to the following procedure: entrance into a research field without any preconceived ideas about the possible findings and their interpretation but with the aim of developing propositions that will need further inquiry (Stebbins, 2001). Accordingly, this research attempts to discover whether the theories and models of organisational learning and social movements can help us understand what is happening within the Greek YWCA.

The Greek YWCA’s case study was conducted by employing a qualitative research strategy approach. This research included interviewing, as well as the supplementary methods of the analysis of my personal notes and of the Greek YWCA’s official and life documents, and research observations that have provided rich descriptions on how specific events and challenges are generated by volunteers’ external and internal interactions. This work employed a qualitative research strategy by conducting the research in the natural settings of the organisation, making a personal interpretation of the data and analyzing data by focusing on the participants’ perceptions, ideas and personal experiences. All of the above suggest the core characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003:181-182). In addition, the

epistemological and ontological positions informing this research are the recognition of the reality of structural patterns, regularities and events characterizing the function of organisations but also the assertion that social phenomena ought to be examined and explained by taking into consideration the meaning that social actors attribute to them. The social theory that best describes this orientation is the critical realist social paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Seale, 1999; Easton, 2002). Critical realism is the perspective that researches the underlying mechanisms that drive certain actions and events by accepting that the knowledge of reality cannot be understood independently of the social actors involved in the derivation of this knowledge (Krauss, 2005; 761-762).

In total, 45 individual and 10 group interviews were conducted. The interviewees were all women volunteers at the local branches of the Greek YWCA. Permission to enter and observe volunteer activities was granted by all the local centres. Moreover, opportunities to spend time and dine with volunteers outside YWCA settings and observe them in a different environment were marked down in all visited local centres. Other sources of data collected were official documents, information and promotional material, my personal documents and notes. The obligation to obtain the participants' consent to observe and interview was undertaken (Appendix I) by taking into consideration the following criteria: firstly the maintenance of confidentiality of data gathered by semi-structured interviews, secondly the importance of the clearance of this research project, thirdly the compliance of data keeping with data protection legislation, fourthly the obligations to the organisation that allowed my access to the various organisational documents, and

finally the non-violation of the privacy of volunteers in the local branches and the intended publication of findings.

Since this research was concerned more with an in-depth analysis of data, this thesis used the organisational-level logic model (Yin, 2003:130) that attempts to utter links between the individuals within an organisation, the organisation and its sub-systems, and finally the organisation as a whole. In addition, this model identifies the influences that interfere between these links, like for example the opinions of individuals about the efficiency of certain actions. In addition, data was organized according to the cross-sectional and category indexing and to the contextual case study or holistic data organisation and explanatory logic (Mason, 2002:150-168). The important themes of the research data highlighted the categories of findings, and then were analyzed according to the theoretical themes of my literature review in organisational learning and social movements. The reason for using both approaches is that the analysis of the Greek YWCA case study around the objectives of the research design, as well as the category indexing according to existing theoretical frames, could build up more valid explanations based on the “slicing of data” by two alternative ways. First, the key categories of the case study were identified by examining the important elements that constitute the whole organisation, and that included the individual members, the local associations and the international organisation. Second, the data was analysed in an interpretive sense that linked inferences to the research’s objectives.

### 1.5. The organisation of the thesis

This thesis is divided into three main parts:

The first part of the study presents the theoretical background of the problem under investigation and the employed methodological scheme for this purpose. The second chapter reviews the existing literature on the models of organisational learning, highlights its different perspectives and assumptions through the presentation of organisational learning processes, and examines the role of organisational learning in the operation of voluntary organisations. The third chapter reviews social movement theory by presenting the emergence and evolution of social movements according to existing theories, by providing a typology of social movements, and by examining the role of social movements in the promotion of change within the voluntary sector. The fourth chapter introduces and analyses the research strategy of the thesis, focuses on the case design study by also providing an examination of its limitations, discusses the rationale behind the use of the selected research methods, looks at the sampling and the data collection techniques, evaluates the research's ethical considerations and the field-research's compromises, and describes the analysis of the findings according to the themes drawn from the review of the organisational learning and social movements theories.

The second part of the study focuses on the reporting of the research findings. Chapters five and six highlight the significant themes of the research data by establishing the Greek YWCA's international and national context, by showing the results obtained from the analysis of the transcribed semi-structured interviews, and in addition by presenting the field notes and the organisational apropos documents obtained during observations at the Greek YWCA's local branches and headquarters .

The main emerging themes and results of the aforementioned findings are the international set of expectations that highlight the new standards of working, performing and achieving within the movement of the Young Women's Christian Association and the national set of expectations that refer to the needs and opinions of the current voluntary workforce of the Greek YWCA.

The third part presents the discussion of the research findings and the conclusions, limitations and contributions of this research. Chapter seven consists of discussions on the synthesis of the evidence derived from the findings' analysis and the related themes drawn from the organisational learning and social movements' theories, and provides a new definition of organisational change in the voluntary sector. Chapter eight entails the concluding remarks and implications in the research area of organisational change in the voluntary sector, the acknowledged limitations as well as the contributions of this study, and outlines the call for further research.



## **Chapter 2: Organisational Learning**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The objective of this chapter is to explore the existing literature on the issue of organisational learning and its' importance within the voluntary sector.

Section 2.2.examines the concept of organisational learning and the related issues of learning organisation, organisational knowledge and individual learning. A survey of existing models and types of organisational learning are presented in section 2.3. .The process of organisational learning practices in the voluntary sector, as well as the opportunities, difficulties, and limitations of organisational learning are considered in section 2.4. . Section 2.5.analyzes a past example of a voluntary organisation that employed organisational learning processes towards its successful transformation. Finally, section 2.6. summarizes the major findings of this chapter.

### **2.2. The concept of organisational learning**

Organisational learning is defined as the process by which an organisation adopts certain types of activity in order to improve its capacity and ability to act (Probst and Buchel, 1997:15). As cited in Falconer (2006: 140), the concept was firstly introduced in 1958 by March and Simon in their book “Organisations”.

Literature on the concept of organisational learning has been developed according to several perspectives. These different perspectives have contributed to the so-called “mystification” (Friedman and Popper, 2005) of organisational learning that captures an “enduring uncertainty about the meaning and practice of organisational

learning”. Strategies on the organisational learning concept demystification entail firstly the acknowledgement of observable organisational learning mechanisms that

relate to rather than distinguish between individual and organisational-level learning, secondly the acknowledgement of the importance of contextual factors that can be found in empirical case studies and that can account for the success or not in organisational learning processes, and finally the acknowledgement of multidisciplinary approaches that can promote the production of useful research findings that can become practice (Friedman and Popper, 2005: 26-27).

There are five characteristics that can promote organisational learning; the first is the existence of a group structure able to promote internal and external team-working, the second is the acquisition of information systems that can promote the sharing of available information, the third is the adoption of human resource practices like rewarding that can in turn promote the manifestation of new working skills and knowledge, the fourth is the development of an organisational culture based on specific norms and values , able to guide the learning processes and finally the fifth is the promotion of leadership that can encourage successful learning (Cummings and Worley, 2001:522-524).

### *2.2.1. Learning organisation*

Often confused with the concept of a learning organisation, organisational learning mainly refers to “scholarly literature ...produced by academics” (Argyris, 1999:1) and it is used in order to describe the actions that an organisation takes in order to become a learning organisation (Tsang, 1997:74). The learning organisation concept encompasses a more practical representation of learning that is the result of the perceptions of practitioners, like human resources managers involved in the learning

processes, and provides recommendations on how to effectively and continuously learn (Senge, 1990). Watkins and Marsick (1993), as cited in Burke (2008:70-71), define the learning organisation as the collection of various units that learn simultaneously at different collective levels, as a capable organisation to effect changes, as an open organisation in redefining existing cultures, structures and designs, as an encouraging organisation in matters of participation in decision-making processes, and finally as the promotion to systemic thinking and organisational memory building.

However, by examining the way in which organisations adapt to learning processes, the concept lacks in its limited focus on how learning is generated. Schein (1996) provides an examination of the aforementioned point by explaining why the non-recognition of generative learning can hinder learning in organisations, by analyzing how the existence of different “cultures” in an organisation and their different assumptions about learning do not always promote organisational improvement, and by concluding that the key to organisational learning may be found in helping the members of each culture to “learn how to learn, how to analyze their cultures and how to evolve those cultures around their strengths”. In addition, the “idea of the learning organisation” is challenged in terms of legitimacy since it is viewed as a constructed concept that lacks objectivity and clarity with regards to the kind of knowledge that learning is trying to pursue (Grieves, 2008:471-472) and to degree to which a dominant culture promotes learning (Franke, 2004).

### *2.2.2. Organisational knowledge*

Organisational knowledge is another concept closely linked to organisational learning theory. According to this perspective, organisational learning is “the process within the organisation by which knowledge about action-outcome relationships and the

effects of the environment on these relationships is developed” (Duncan and Weiss, 1979:84). Organisational knowledge can be termed technical by reference to technical words and recipes, scientific by reference to causal generalizations, and experiential or narrative by reference to organisational storytelling.

Despite the fact that these two concepts are linked together both in the academic and management world, their analysis starts from completely different origins and their applications adopt different techniques. An integrative approach, however, of these two concepts in explaining the process of learning in organisations, highlights the fact that organisational knowledge is a crucial component of organisational learning and not a separate perspective of learning (Chiva and Ricardo, 2005:64). Organisational learning takes place through the sharing of knowledge, and improvements in organisational operations are more likely to be achieved when knowledge is enriched. Organisational knowledge is not always shared or diffused equally. Bontis and Hulland (2002) test the flow of knowledge across the individual, team and organisational levels of analysis and conclude that there is a misalignment of organisational knowledge that influences at the end the performance of an organisation.

### *2.2.3. Individual learning*

Individual learning in an organisational context is also related to the organisational learning perspective and it is characterized as a prerequisite to organisational learning. Consequently, organisational learning is perceived as a process which involves the interactions and interchange of opinions among individuals that share their knowledge through collective learning for the improvement of their organisational operations. Individual learning is the first level of a multileveled process that through group learning leads to organisational learning (Crossan and White,

1999:525). To this multileveled process that entails the four different levels of individual intuition, of individual opinions' interpretation, of development of understanding among individuals through integration, and finally of institutionalization of individual and group ideas. The management of individuals' emotions can add value to the effectiveness of organisations. The older impersonal management of emotions, that restrained at large the emotional expression, is

currently substituted by an alternative approach; bounded emotionality encourages the expression of emotions and considers emotions a valuable and manageable asset for organisational communication and performance (Martin and Beckman 1998:429). Lawrence and Kleysen (2005:182) add the concept of power that underlines the importance of the "political will and skill" of individuals that attempt to integrate their ideas in the group's activities and further transform them into organisational institutions.

Senge (1990) argues that successful organisational learning depends on the interaction among individuals and groups by focusing in five different disciplines. The first discipline refers to the effort of individuals towards their personal development. The second discipline refers to the adoption of common norms that highlight the way in which people and organisations are being perceived. The third discipline refers to the development of shared visions about an organisation and its future. The fourth discipline highlights the importance of shifting from individual to collective learning. And, finally, the fifth discipline, which is also the title of Senge's book, underlines the importance of combining each of the aforementioned disciplines in order to create organisations that can continuously and effectively learn.

Nevertheless, empirical findings testify that individual learning may not have an impact on organisational learning, since it is a limited process that takes place within an

existing status quo that aims at the maintenance rather at the change of the patterns characterizing an organisation (Antonacopoulou, 2007:119-131).

#### *2.2.4. The limitations of organisational learning*

Research revealed that the most cited limitation of organisational learning theory is mainly based on findings coming from case studies that entail prescriptions rather than analysis and synthesis of observed phenomena that could further advance empirical studies (Burnes, 2004:133). The use of case studies and their findings offer perhaps a better insight into the learning of a specific organisation, but it is equally important to examine the factors that govern knowledge sharing in the process of learning.

Hugsman (2009:1) argues that existing definitions tend to focus on the results of organisational learning rather than on the ways in which learning actually takes place. Existing literature treats organisational learning as a process without the participation of individuals and groups, whereas it is the individuals' capacity and ability to learn that actually promotes the development of organisations.

Moreover, the positive outcome of organisational learning ought to be questioned and represented also from their negative view since they are usually elements of promotional action on behalf of various organisations' management (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001: 135). An example provided is that of the innovative approaches to the development of employees, management and organisation that if translated from the negative side of view can refer to the strengthening of top management's control.

Finally, the existence of widespread literature on the concept of organisational learning does not provide a clear definition about its meaning in terms of changes in the

states of knowledge or in terms of organisational outcomes (Fiol and Lyles, 1985:803). The changes generated by the acquisition of knowledge do not always coincide with the production of organisational changes towards the improvement of an organisation's performance.

### 2.3. The models of organisational learning

The original introduced concepts of first and second order learning by Gregory Bateson in the behavioural theory of organisational learning, acknowledge the difference between "simple or proto-learning" that corresponds to the responses of individuals to the contingent incentives of their environment, the

"gestalt or deutero-learning" that corresponds to the innate insight of and analysis by individuals of "proto-learning", and finally, introduces the "trito-learning" that corresponds to the redefinition and change of situations that characterize the nature of a person's character (Visser, 2003:271-276).

Related to Bateson's typology, Argyris and Schon (1978) distinguish between single-loop, double-loop and triple-loop learning and describe a movement from adaptive, to reconstructive and finally to transformative learning. In single-loop learning individuals, groups and organisations design their actions and modify any detected errors, in order to meet the demands of the organisation's objectives. In double-loop learning individuals, groups and organisations challenge the appropriateness of the organisation's norms, values and policies, and aim at the reconstruction of organisational operations by adopting new structures. In triple-loop learning individuals, groups and organisations question the general rationale behind the operation of an organisation and aim at its transformation.

In addition, Shrivastava (1983:20- 24) identifies six different types of learning systems that include:

- i. The one man institution, in which one man is the person that possesses and processes the key and subjective organisational knowledge that is built according to his perceptions and ideas, and that, is transmitted to the rest of the organisation's members.
- ii. The mythological learning systems, in which learning is achieved through the evolution of organisational norms by means of sharing subjective organisational myths that are well accepted.
- iii. The information seeking culture, in which knowledge is developed by encouraged individuals and is shared by the "word of mouth" technique within the organisations.
- iv. The participative learning systems, in which participation to decision-making processes is institutionalized and performed by expert working groups that address specific organisational problems.
- v. The formal management systems, in which learning is objectively, accomplished through the implementation of formal management systems that combine experience and scientific management techniques
- vi. The bureaucratic learning systems, in which learning objectively proceeds according to specific guidelines and aims at remaining bound to the rules and regulations.

Moreover, by examining the dynamics of organisational learning, Hugsman (2009:57-58), provides a typology of organisational learning processes that refer to the ways in which organisations learn and those include four different types of learning. The first type is "internal learning" and refers to the building of knowledge through



interactions among the members of an organisation, the second type is “feedback learning” and refers to the learning of organisations that is the result of adapting to their environment, the third type is “learning from others” or external knowledge and refers to the use of other organisations’ experiences, and the fourth and final type is “creative learning” that refers to the creation of new knowledge through experimentation.

Furthermore, it is argued that each organisation ought to adopt its own model of becoming a learning organisation. Probst and Buchel (1997:16) propose four generic approaches by arguing that “organisational learning is unique in every organisation” and that learning can develop in different ways according to an institution’s needs. The first one refers to learning by the development of a strategy and underlines the importance of individuals’ participation through practical learning. The second approach highlights the importance of structural forms that can support learning. The third approach identifies the essential element of culture that promotes learning through collective actions based on common norms and beliefs. The fourth approach integrates human resources practices that develop individuals and groups through participation to learning processes.

Finally, in search for a conceptual model that can distinguish through the various learning levels and the corresponding organisational transition in each of these levels, Hedberg and Wolff (2001: 545-546) identify four “learning situations” that challenge the structure of organisations and lead to organisational changes. These four types are:

i. Type I Learning: Same Perception and Same Response; a situation in which responses to organisational stimuli entail issues with regards to quality improvements and efficient ways of operations. An example of this learning situation is that of manufacturing organisations that produce the same products with improved methods, but within a standard and stable production /system.

ii. Type II Learning: Same Perception and Different Response; a situation in which responses to the organisations' environment stimuli entails issues with regards to the development of new strategies. Examples are product repackaging, the evolution of new products or services and other methods that aim at meeting new markets and new customer needs.

iii. Type III Learning: Different Perception and Same Response; a situation in which the responses that fail to meet the organisations' actual situation are questioned. Organisations survive when they succeed in meeting the challenges of novelty and reformulate their actions and ways of operation

iv. Type IV Learning: Different Perception and Different Response; a situation in which the overcoming of the crisis in type III learning is initiating the formulation of a learning strategy in order for organisations to discover their new orientation and ensure their "future basis for survival".

#### 2.4. The process of organisational learning in the voluntary sector

Organisational learning is an essential practice for the survival of voluntary organisations since it can provide useful supporting material for new technologies, new funding capabilities increased demand for greater accountability, raised expectations from voluntary associations and collaboration with government and business sectors. Voluntary organisations seek to change their status, when facing the opportunities of organisational learning. Organisational learning is a process that most, if not all, of contemporary organisations are adopting, as a consequence of fast-moving trends and developments in the global agenda (Burnes, 2004:126-127).

It is argued that through the acquisition of organisational skills, voluntary organisations aim at changes of the environment in which they are operating rather than at the preservation of a stable status quo (Lewis, 2006:94). Moreover, organisational learning must be in line with the social character of the voluntary organisations since the application of organisational learning outcome presupposes the reflection on and the selection of innovative ways for approaching social problems (Witkamp, 2010:305).

Korten (1980:500) identifies three major stages that describe the learning process in third-sector organisations. The first stage refers to “learning to be effective” through consideration of the ways in which certain tasks will be performed. The second stage refers to “learning to be efficient” through consideration of linking the way of performing to the achievement of certain goals. The third stage refers to “learning to expand” through consideration of applying certain tasks that are tested for their efficiency to a greater scale of activities.

#### *2.4.1. Becoming a “learning voluntary organisation”*

Successful organisational learning can support an organisation’s operation and lead to high levels of good performance. Innovation and the use of advanced technologies can support the development of voluntary organisations within a constantly changing environment. Studies, in the reactions of voluntary organisations to the use of advanced information and communication technologies, conclude that organisations, that consider the technological opportunities, react positively to their adoption and use (Bishop, 2010:991-1013; Burt and Taylor, 2003:115-127).

Key elements of successful learning approaches in the non-governmental and non-profit sector refer to phases that rely on the building of new knowledge from experience and through production of improved new ways of operation (Aldrich,

1998:88). Moreover, the organisational mission can be influential when confronted with the challenges of applying new organisational technologies (Mc Donald, 2007:256). Commitment to a clear and comprehensive mission facilitates selection of the most appropriate innovations.

The American Society of Association Executives has conducted research and has identified seven characteristics that contribute to successful adaptation to the new changing environment of the voluntary sector (Gill, 2010:763-765). These characteristics were grouped into three categories:

- i. Commitment to Purpose that entails responsiveness to the members' needs and encourages alignment of services with the organisations' mission
- ii. Commitment to Analysis and Feedback that includes formulation of strategies according to members' feedback, inter-organisational dialogue and partnership and emergence of facilitative and generative leadership
- iii. Commitment to Action that describes the continuous organisational adaptability and the building of partnerships and connections

In addition, by examining three case studies of non-profit community organisations and rooting the analysis of the case studies' findings in organisational learning theory, Perkins (2007), conclude that the

empowerment of volunteers through learning opportunities at individual level can successfully promote second-order learning and transform an organisation. In particular, Perkins (2007:322) suggests that organisational staff and volunteers ought to reflect on:

- i. how to promote change not only on their organisational mission but also on their organisation demonstrated goals.

Non-profit organisations differ from their for-profit counterparts in their profitability motives. The missing profit motive underlines the multiple choices of the non-profit sector in the provision of goods and services (Anheier, 2000:7); and this is usually why voluntary organisations operate in the fields of vulnerable and sensitive population groups. Voluntary organisations exercise numerous practices in relation to social policies (Lewis, 2006:148-151); voluntary agencies can become the gap-fillers in government service provision, especially in areas of vulnerable populations, and they can act as pressure groups on behalf of these groups and propose alternative measures in the social agenda. Therefore, the adoption of a new agenda and of new aims ought to be obvious not only in the mission statement of an organisation, but also in the goods and services that this organisation is offering.

ii. how to analyze the power relationships that characterize the decision-making processes.

Power is a multidimensional concept, whose interpretations vary according to the context in which power is exercised (Lukes, 1974:25; Venenklasen and Miller, 2002:49). The neutral or general definition of power concerns the participation to the decision-making processes and connects power to the development of rightful and legitimized control (Rowlands, 1995:101; Anheier, 2005:160). According to Rowlands (1995:103), the collective dimension of empowerment is that “where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have done alone. This includes involvement in political structures, but might also cover collective action based on co-operation rather than competition.” Nevertheless, effective empowerment entails also the recognition of the individuals’ power (Venenklasen and Miller, 2002:64). Decision-making processes at all levels of volunteers’ involvement entail a more fair apportionment of power and is best achieved through the empowerment of volunteers.

iii. and how to integrate the participant stakeholders that maintain an interdependent relationship with the organisation.

The aforementioned integration refers to the issue of optimal allocation of resources, as well as to the matter of meeting goals towards the best fulfilment of social needs. Moreover, members and staff of an organisation may adopt different measurements of effectiveness than those required by people, who provide the resources and the funds to an organisation (McCarthy 2007:158). Among other compelling arguments for the need to maintain the interdependent relationship with the participant stakeholders is the argument that includes the importance of the accountability demand of individuals, the significant role of the voluntary sector in service provision and in the acquisition of state and other funding, the role of the employer – voluntary organisation- and employee –paid staff- relationship, and the increasing dependence on donations and membership subscriptions (Kumar,2003).

#### *2.4.2. Difficulties in becoming a “learning voluntary organisation”*

There are important barriers that tend to limit the ability of organisations in creating a learning culture. Problems that refer to communication among between the systems in an organisation, to diffusions caused by the various decision- making processes, and to the struggle to maintain an organisational culture based on legitimized values and rules, can become obstacles in the effort of organisations to learn (Brown and Convey, 1987:56). Gill (2010:15-26) identifies the major problems that inhibit learning by concentrating on the following observations:

- The focus on program delivery and not on organisational improvement; this refers to the finding of a balance between meeting the individual needs of members while maintaining a vision of the longer term goals (Harris, 1997: 4). Under this proposition lays the dilemma of many associations as to where to prioritize and this in turn makes any further steps difficult towards organisational innovation. A related difficulty arises also from the allocation of resources when there are competing internal interests or when there is distinction between allocation to members and to non-members (Harris, 1997:7). In the first case there is the danger of bringing in individual interests before the interests of the organisation (Milofsky, 1987:283), whereas in the second case there is a contrast between “membership-based” and “membership-benefit” priorities (Harris, 1997:7).
- The limited sources of time and money; obtaining funding can become a very frustrating job for voluntary associations, since they are financially vulnerable and frequently rely on the support of a few individuals (Billings, 2000:7). In addition, obtaining funding is very time consuming and competitive especially among small community groups.
- The assumption that learning is an extracurricular activity and therefore less important than work itself; the involvement of volunteers into learning processes is a challenge that demands clear strategic design. Colin Rochester (2000:27) suggests that the principal challenges underlying the overall challenge of involving volunteers are recruitment, retention,

involvement and the support and supervision processes. Recruitment is a very difficult task that may leave the associations surprised when finding out that their expectations about the motives of new volunteers are not what they expected (Clary, Snyder & Ridge, 1992:344). The involvement of volunteers also entails the challenge to distinguish the kind of volunteering, especially in membership associations where time and work is offered in return of direct benefits for the members and their families (Harris, 1997:5).

- The passive leadership that avoids the challenge of current organisational operations; leadership is often confused with the term management and it is common belief that “the best leadership in the voluntary sector is often silent and hidden” (Plummer, 2007:8). Leaders of associations may find themselves isolated and emotionally incurred (Rochester, 2000:22) since they undertake most of the responsibilities.
- The non-learning culture that emphasizes on the strict and concrete implementation of programs serving only the organisation’s mission; not accepting to learn can produce a sense of frustration within a voluntary agency, especially in cases where agencies want to keep close to their missions and activities and don’t risk to alter their goals in the pursuit of obtaining further resources or more volunteers (Powell and Friedkin, 1987:180). Furthermore, the non-learning culture entails also the challenge of growth. Due to competition or to changes of local authorities’ priorities, agencies are often suspicious in surpassing their current state and work towards the development of their organisation. Nevertheless, the isolation can weaken the influence of the



governing bodies, reduce the number of volunteers and make the network of social relationships within the communities less stable (Backman and Smith, 2000:335).

- The resistance to change that underlines the avoidance of taking risks; change can produce a sense of frustration within the agency, especially in cases where agencies want to keep close to their missions and activities and do not risk altering their goals in the pursuit of obtaining further resources or more volunteers (Powell and Friedkin, 1987:180).
- Not discussing the un-discussable and not challenging the status quo of an organisation; an example of these barriers is the concept of accountability that can become a very difficult task, especially for small agencies since it can be both time consuming and a high requirements responsibility. As Rochester (2000:41) suggests the small size of the associations depicts also the lack of expertise that could create the appropriate basis for the formulation of a clarified accountability report and that can further entail the great challenge of obtaining funds. Furthermore, the non-challenging of the status quo of an organisation refers to the lack of volunteers' demand for explanatory accountability- that refers to the right to be provided with an explanatory and descriptive account of resources allocation-, for accountability with sanctions that is the provision of an explanatory account upon which sanctions can be imposed and finally for responsive accountability that is the response to the demands of those to whom the members of an organisation are accountable to (Leat, 1988:67-68; Wadsworth, 1991:63; Cutt and Murray, 2000:11).

- The need for control and the constraint of strict operational regulations that do not favour inter-organisational communication; an example of this need for control refers to the important role of the paid staff within voluntary associations. Whether in the role of assistants or in the role of operational workers, paid staff faces either distrust or carries a heavy workload. In addition, paid staff may also threaten the participation of members since their presence may describe the entrance of the association into “bureaucratic territory” (Billis, 1989:15).
- The focus on short term and simple solutions; in small voluntary associations the “liability of smallness” is an obstacle for looking at long-term goals and an excuse for focusing only on simple solutions. Rochester (2000:8) approaches this distinctive characteristic by introducing four challenges /which apply to the management of small organisations; balancing informal and formal volunteering, balancing routine and long-term goals, dividing the work load, and accessing external sources of information, advice and support.
- The skilled incompetence that constrains the undertaking of responsibilities; the challenge of developing an effective governing body is especially influential for small agencies, where informal relationships between members may lead to the absence of strong commitments and responsibilities. In addition, governance can be an especially difficult task for small community groups and organisations when it can have several and different requirements (Kumar and Nunan, 2002:1-2). Harris’s (1991:1) work on the role of voluntary governance committees, shows that the roles of the governing body are interdependent with other organisational roles, and that there are differences in the perceptions of the staff,

the members and the governing board, of who should be doing what in the organisation.

- The use of blaming language that assumes judgment, guilt and fault; the management of volunteers is a challenge that seeks the design of a good psychological strategy (Clary, Snyder & Ridge, 1992:333-334) since volunteers are considered as the main carrier of work within the

association and /have to remain pleased with the time and amount of work they offer. Otherwise they may feel angry because there was not sufficient recognition of their work (Harris, 1995:17) or they may feel neglected and ignored, although they “draw a boundary between themselves and others in order to meet some problem, to do something” (Billis, 1989:11). The aforementioned sentiments of judgment, guilt and fault are evident in small voluntary associations, whose organisation has been thoroughly neglected by researchers (Harris, 1998:145; Rochester, 2008:60-61; Smith, 2000:33), and whose members feel guilty for not being able to /respond to the challenges of the changing environment of the voluntary sector.

#### *2.4.3. Meeting the limitations of organisational learning in the voluntary sector*

As already stated in the introductory chapter, the nature of non-profit organisations is not well understood, the management of such organisations is often “ill understood” and “ill conceived” because we start from the wrong assumptions of how non-profit organisations function. In the same sense, by acknowledging the particular ways in which voluntary organisations learn, and the specific characteristics of the

voluntary workforce, it is essential to highlight the limitations of organisational learning in the voluntary sector too.

Ebrahim (2005: 56) argues that organisational learning as a foundational view of accountability, may lead to the hindering of an organisation's mission. Ebrahim (2005:73-80) identifies seven propositions that aim at balancing organisational learning and accountability through evaluation.

The first proposition underlines the importance of organisational members' perceptions about learning and proposes that learning is better achieved in the case that accountability is perceived as an evaluation rather than as a task done by external experts. In this way, volunteers understand the accountability demands, identify their organisational problems and build by themselves the capacity to take actions towards the solution of any problems (Cairns and Young, 2005: 875).

The second proposition suggests that in cases of errors and failures, learning is more successful if these errors and failures are perceived as opportunities rather as threats to sanctions. Caring and understanding behaviours contribute to the creation of "positive learning environments" (Beattie, 2006:109) and help in identifying the barriers and bridge the gaps resulting from errors in organisational operations.

The third proposition demonstrates the role of external instabilities and the high influence of organisational learning in helping individuals anticipating and meeting the outcomes of such instabilities. Uvin and Miller (1996) suggest that organisations may reach a point at which they understand that they have to alternate their objectives and strengthen their dynamics in order to "scale-up" their impact and meet external challenges. The organisational scaling-up corresponds to the financial and institutionalized methods of creating activities that reinforce the generation of income and links with external actors.

The fourth proposition points to internal communication strategies and to learning across hierarchies within the organisations and shows that learning is more likely when the dissemination of knowledge is decentralized and open for use in each one of these hierarchies. The learning capacity of an organisation is further supported when the diffusion of knowledge is done across the networks of an organisation and members are encouraged to improve and extend this knowledge (Phipps and Burbach, 2010:4).

The fifth proposition considers the importance of internal evaluations with regards to job descriptions and performance carried by organisational members, and concludes that learning is more likely in the case that such evaluations are supported by the organisations rather than carried out by donors' hired evaluators. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) introduce the Volunteering Stages and Transitions Model (VSTM) and suggest that the "organisational socialization of volunteers" is an activity highly influenced by the emotions, values, perceptions and behaviours of the volunteers that are involved in each stage and transition. By evaluating themselves, volunteers are able to identify possible drawbacks or successes emanating from their own work.

The sixth proposition addresses the relevance of information systems and argues that simplicity and flexibility in information systems promotes organisational learning. The abilities to shift to information systems thinking and to include technology in the phase of development are essential for organisations that are expected to be responsive to criticism that concerns their current levels of learning, performance and accountability (Lewis and Madon, 2004:9).

The seventh and final proposition encompasses the meaning of the aforementioned six propositions by stating that "organisational learning is more likely, if internal accountability to mission, rather than upward accountability to donors, guides

information and reporting systems”. Kong and Farrell (2010:97) argue that “relational capital represents the knowledge and learning capabilities that exist in relationships between an organisation and its external stakeholders” where external stakeholders are government, donors, community, and clients. If this capital is balanced and the improvement of relationships with one external stakeholder is not favoured against a relationship with another one, then the organisation that owns this capital is able to ensure that its objective and mission are met.

## 2.5. The example of a transformative organisational learning process in the voluntary sector

An example of a voluntary organisation that adopted transformative organisational learning processes is that of the Young Men’s Christian Association that took place in the 1960s in New York. Without sacrificing its mission, the organisation was transformed from a purely religious association to a broad service association. The change of the organisational objectives is explained according to four main factors (Powell and Friedkin, 1987:187-188).

### *2.5.1. The support of the volunteers*

The first factor is that the YMCA acknowledged and supported the role and the work of lay volunteers. Rochester (2006:29) observes that the challenges in the development of volunteering also include the demand for quality volunteering. Volunteers do expect to receive the appropriate training and support that will enable them to operate effectively and efficiently. Published reports of the Institute for Volunteering Research (Gaskin, 2003a; Machin and Paine, 2008), illustrate the need for

the development of a volunteering infrastructure that will reinforce quality volunteering by considering the personal characteristics of each volunteer. Moreover, Gaskin (2003b) introduces the use of the VIVA (Volunteer Investment and Value Audit) measurement tool that provides significant information about the value of voluntary work in an organisation.

The extent to which volunteers are expected to be involved depends on the management model of the voluntary organisation. Meijs and Hoogstad (2001:50) compare the program management and the membership management models, and demonstrate their differences. They argue that membership management – which describes the horizontal integration and the high and permanent involvement of volunteers- may be best for mutual support organisations, whereas service delivery and campaigning organisations, that demands higher level of professionalism may require the adoption of program management techniques. However, Rochester (1999:5) argues that “One size, does not fit all”, by identifying four kinds of volunteers’ involvement in voluntary organisations; the service delivery model that describes a high level of volunteers’ involvement and the professional support of paid staff, the support role model that describes the volunteers’ work as supportive and supplementing to that of the paid staff, the member activist model according to which all operations are run by volunteers, and finally the co-worker model where there are no clear boundaries between the roles of volunteers and professional paid staff.

The YMCA, influenced by its historical reliance on the work of volunteers, continued to rely on the horizontal integration of lay volunteers in the delivery of services (Powell and Friedkin, 1987:187). The retention of volunteers was considered a strategic decision in order to support and sustain their committed services (Clary, Sinder and Ridge, 1992:345-346). Nevertheless, policy decision making became centralized and acquired a supportive professional body. The combination of program and

membership management, underlined the importance of both local members and professional staff.

#### *2.5.2. The search for alternative funding sources*

The second factor is that the search for secure and long-term funding encouraged the pursuit for new strategies. Allison and Kaye (2005:4) suggest that non-profit organisations traditionally raise money and spend it according to their organisation's short-term objectives. The adoption of strategic planning entails the search for resources on a long-term basis. Chauhan (1998:5) identifies a combination of internal and external forces that stimulate the undertaking of formal strategic planning. Among them are the difficulties in volunteer management and fundraising.

The rise of social entrepreneurship is criticized for influencing the involvement of volunteers and governing bodies by including the financial element of funding as the essential practice for the survival of an organisation and by weakening social support and social networks (Backman and Smith, 2000:355); or as stated by Van Til (2008:111): "When the Business of Nonprofits is Increasingly Business." The pressures for institutional isomorphism force organisations to adjust to commercial practices in order to achieve stability through external funding (Sowa, 2008:1003).

The YMCA's program innovations included the construction of a male dormitory and gymnasium and the operation of fee-for-service programs. The growth of fee income set the grounds for the commercialization of the organisation (Anheier, 2005:211) and secured its long-term operation.



### *2.5.3. The change of organisational structure*

The third factor is that the YMCA understood the importance of changing its organisational structure. The YMCA acknowledged the contribution of the organisations' local associations or branches and permitted their flexible operation that aimed at fulfilling the diverse and different needs of each local association's members and not only at applying the priority programs of the YMCA headquarters.

Smith (2000:34) argues that organisations usually strive for the impact of their overall picture and neglect the contribution of small grassroots associations and their associated volunteering. The Redford Locality Study (Eldson, 1995:40) shows that half the population of the British voluntary sector belongs to local voluntary organisations, and concludes further that over two-fifths of these organisations are devoted to the specific personal interests of their members. However, the "smallness" of local associations can be problematic in terms of volunteers' participation, financial instability, limited expertise, and isolation (Rochester, 1999:3-4).

Nevertheless, current trends underline the supportive role of associations to the development of non-profits. Ballaciano and Chandler's work (2010:947-954) shows that the voluntary sector's sustainability is currently strengthened by its dedication to the fulfilment of local community needs. Moreover, the potential weaknesses of the past, that showed a resistance of grassroots associations to innovation and technology, are being replaced by an interest to reinforce the mutual communication of local organisations with the external environment (Brainard and Brinkerhoff, 2004:32-51).

The local associations of the YMCA were granted the autonomy and the support that they needed, in order to maintain the YMCA's presence and power throughout the American states.

#### *2.5.4. The transformation of the offered programs and services*

The fourth factor was that the organisation took into consideration the importance of the local needs of the environment in which it was operating. Shoham and Schwabsky (2006:453) argue that voluntary organisations' operations tend to seriously consider the importance of being aware and meeting the various needs of vulnerable populations. This marketing orientation is closely related to their overall efficiency and effectiveness. According to Sargeant (2005:182), the social marketer designs the appropriate programs by taking into consideration the needs and the attitude of the individuals to whom the programs will be addressed. Sargeant (2005:99-100) further suggests that "service marketing" entails the procedures of identifying the requirements of the target segments, evaluating the quality standards of the customers, setting the price according to the recipient's group capacity, and ensuring service accessibility.

Prior YMCA emphasis on religious issues was substituted by a broader emphasis on human welfare purposes. The YMCA adapted its services to the needs of the community, by setting aside its theological influences but not its organisational mission of cultivating the physical and spiritual characteristics of young men.

#### 2.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on literature that provides insight into the concept of organisational learning. Section 2.2. provided an overview of organisational learning, identified the related concepts of learning organisation, organisational knowledge and individual learning that contribute to the enrichment of organisational learning theory by underlying the ways in which organisations change, and addressed the limitations of organisational learning theory. Section 2.3. presented the models of organisational

learning theory which facilitate the learning processes. Section 2.4. looked at the role of organisational learning in the voluntary sector by examining the ways in which learning processes are taking place, the difficulties that may arise when organisations learn, and the propositions towards meeting organisational learning limitations. The organisational learning challenges of the voluntary sector's associations refer mainly to their attitude towards the shift to new and innovative ways of operation and to the critical issues of micro-management practices that frame the everyday reality of organisations in the voluntary sector. Finally, the study of a successful organisational transformation is examined in section 2.5. . The reliance on and support of local community links, the designation of programs close to their members' needs, and the innovative practices in resourcing and planning were the factors that shaped the Young Men's Christian Association organisational transformation, without putting in jeopardy its organisational mission.

The aim of this review was to highlight the contribution of organisational learning to the understanding of the change concept within the voluntary sector. The contribution of social movements' theory that aims equally at the aforementioned understanding is discussed in detail in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Social Movements**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Social movements constitute a type of group action. As large informal groups of individuals they engage in collective action for a common purpose that focuses on specific political, social and other issues. Social movements form in order to bring about social changes. Walker (1994:669) compares social movements to “mosquitoes on the evening breeze” that act like irritants to “those who claim maturity and legitimacy at the centres of political life.” Just like some mosquitoes, some social movements may have “deadly effects.” The institutionalization or “taming” of social movements is the civilization and the integration of movements into the political scene (Kaldor, 2003:83).

The emergence of social movements and the consequent involvement of people can be explained according to theories that were developed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the recently. Closely related to the wider dissemination of ideas as well as to the freedom of expression through literature, the press and new communication technologies, the theories of social movements highlight the relation between ideas and individuals.

The key ideas and processes that lie behind the creation of social movements provide information for the typology of social movements. Depending on the extent and the type of change that they are aiming at, social movements are distinguished into several types.

The evolution of the global civil society has influenced the emergence of transnational civic networks, in which the agents of social movements, non-governmental and voluntary organisations become interdependent (Kaldor, 2003:86; Tilly, 1999:201). Social movements are not perceived as fluid, irrational and unorganized forms of action and have the ability to change the organisational perspectives of voluntary agencies (Zald, 2005:161). Social movements can constitute an internal and constitutional source of change within voluntary sector organisations. They can promote organisational change in the voluntary sector by mobilizing organisations that are resistant to change (Zald, 2005:160-162). Changes emerge and force organisations to operate in a responsive way.

### 3.2. The emergence of Social Movements

The underlying assumptions concerning the definitions and the emergence of social movements, underpin the question of the evolution of collective actions. The answer, according to Tilly (1982: 1) is:

“Collective action is, on the other hand, a coherent historical phenomenon. The specific ways in which people act together on their interests vary enormously from one social situation to another. Repression, for example, generally works to deflect and decrease collective action by ordinary people, even if people fight back now and then, against quick and visible intensification of repression. Again, groups that already have substantial internal organisation are generally more prone to act collectively than groups that have only a threat, an opportunity or an interest in common.

From the history of protest and disorder we can profitably turn to the history of collective action.”

An earlier study by Tilly (1981: 8) identifies how the generalized collective action in Britain during the 18<sup>th</sup> century led to the creation of social movements. Among other compelling factors the following are identified as the most important:

- i. That British citizens did belong to various collective bodies that were entitled to exercise their rights
- ii. That the British law was protecting these collective rights
- iii. That the local authorities had the obligation to respect the British law that guaranteed these rights
- iv. That the representatives of these collective bodies had both the obligation and the right to communicate to the public their demands and grievances
- v. That the local authorities had the right to consider these demands and grievances and act in favour of the collective bodies in case that the demands were just
- vi. And finally, that no one outside the above described framework, had the right neither to assemble and nor to state demands.

These forms of collective actions reminded something like a theatrical performance during which the same dialogues were repeated and the same end was the outcome of every occasion. “Britain creates the social movement” (Tilly, 1981:15) when the “patronized” forms of collective

action gave their way to more autonomous and liberal forms. Newly formed associations became the means for communicating the new demands and grievances, promoted their alliances with other associations in order to enlarge their basis and empowered their appearance through the rise of strong and distinguished leaders.

The definitional sketch in literature of the contemporary social movements provides a conceptualization of social movements according to the following axes (Snow and Kriesi, 2004: 6-11):

- i. Social movements as a form of collective action outside of institutional channels that entail the pursuit of a common goal through joint or collective actions of individuals,
- ii. Social movements as challengers to or defenders of existing authority that seek to promote or resist to changes in the environment within which they are being developed,
- iii. Movements as organized authority that refers to the coordination of collective action towards the meeting of a specific goal,
- iv. Movements as existing with some temporal continuity that implies the non routine activity of movements but the variability in the degree and the density of collective activities.

The emergence of social movements and the consequent involvement of more people can be explained according to four major

theories: the grievance or collective action theory (Finkel and Opp, 1989:897), the resource mobilization theory (Mc Carthy and Zald, 1977:151), the political opportunity theory (Tarrow, 1996:41), and the collective identity and framing theory (Poletta and Jasper, 2001:283-305),

### *3.2.1. Grievance or collective action theory*

The collective action theory argues that social movements form as the response of people that are deprived from resources essential for the improvement of their social, political and financial conditions. According to Crossley (2002: 11), literature on the collective approach describes the emergence and formation of social movements as the psychological response to collective and objective hardship by individuals that due to their grievances are isolated from society.

However, Jenkins and Perrow (1977) point out that the theory of collective action fails to explain why members of social movements are not just deprived people and provides a circular reasoning for the formation of movements in the sense that deprivation is both the cause and the end for movements' emergence. Moreover, as Oliver argues (1989: 16) an important outcome of social movements' actions is not only observed in the protesters and movements members' lives; outcome influences also the "consciousness" of the broad population and has also effects in the non-activists lives.



### *3.2.2. Resource mobilization theory*

The theory of resource mobilization emphasizes the important role of resource acquisition for the development of a social movement. Resources entail internal assets such as participants and knowledge, whereas external assets include the media and funds. The main argument of this theory is that the development of social movements takes place when individuals mobilize sufficient resources in order to take action.

McCarthy and Zald (1973:1), argue that “resources support the growth and vitality of movements and movement organisation” and explain the shift from the fluidity in organisation movements or from the “hearts and minds” bias, to a more professional style according to the following reasons. The first reason highlights the changes and increases of participation to the movements, by attributing them to the new middle class that had both the time and the social need to become involved in broader social events. The second reason analyses the support of social movements by other social components such as the church, associations, foundations and business co-operations that provides movements with important resources either through funding or by the establishment of professional positions.

In addition, the different historical contexts within which movements emerge, the different demands that movements aim to fulfil and the different resources available and present in the environment within which movements develop, influence the strategies that social movements adopt in order to achieve resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1236).

### *3.2.3. Political process or political opportunity theory*

The political process model adopts two principle ideas; a social movement is a “political” phenomenon and “represents a continuous process from generation to decline” (Mc Adam, 1997: 172-173). It emphasizes the political opportunities as the major component for social movement’s development.

Political opportunity was the vital component for the democratic social movements that emerged in 1989 in East European countries (Obershall, 1996: 94). Political opportunity had both an internal and an external aspect; the internal was the monopolistic communist party that was ruled by a national but vulnerable elite that lacked legitimacy, whereas the external aspect referred to the international environment that favoured the opposition to East European regimes(countries) or what Obershall (1996: 94-95) named the “Gorbachev” aspect, since this politician was the one that welcomed and did not intervene to stop western international reforms in Eastern Europe.

The contemporary political process theory focuses in the domination of not one but multiple sources of power (Armstrong and Bernstein, 2008:74). This new approach is useful while attempting to explain the development of the new transnational movements, that entail the relationship among several sources of nations’ and institutions’ power and the different way in which these powers influence the emergence of a transnational movement from one country to another. Based on Gramson’s study of ACT UP movement (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), Armstrong and Bernstein (2008: 88-89) illustrate the multi-institutional

politics perspective by suggesting that global social movements in a national context do not confront an abstract or “invisible enemy” but challenge the grievances of the movement within each different state.

Both political opportunity and resources’ mobilization theories are being criticized for omitting the issue of culture. Too much emphasis on resources and opportunities for social movements to emerge and develop fails to recognize the composite sketch within which collective action actually takes place. People engage in movements in order to demonstrate their solidarity by identifying themselves with other people who share common values and beliefs (Glasius, 2004). This missing ingredient stresses the importance of the collective identity and framing theory.

#### *3.2.4. Collective identity and framing theory*

The collective identity theory explains the social movements’ emergence according to the common culture that the movements’ members share. Culture refers to the collection of beliefs, values and ideologies of individuals to be found within a social movement that illustrates the significance of a specific problem and highlights ways in which this problem can be overcome. In addition, the frame is conceived as the diagnosis of injustice and it holds within it the demands of individuals. Ryan and Gamson (2006:14) define the injustice frame developed within social movements as follows:

“Like a picture frame, an issue frame marks off some part of the world. Like a building frame, it holds things together. It provides coherence to an array of symbols, images and arguments, linking them through an

underlying organizing idea that suggests what is essential, what consequences and values are at stake. We do not see the frame directly, but infer its presence by its characteristic expressions and language. Each frame gives the advantage to certain ways of talking and thinking, while it places others out of the picture.”

Social movements contribute significantly to the observation of cultural processes (Hart, 1996: 98). Observations entail the existence, application, interpretation and transformation of cultural elements involved in social movements. There are processes according to which the development frames are developed and generated. It is argued that collective identity is a process that contains 3 major parts (Melucci, 1989; Poletta and Jasper, 2001; Benford and Snow, 2000; Ryan and Gamson, 2006): *the formulation of an identity, the activation of individuals and the choice of a strategy*. Benford and Snow (2000:623-627) conceptualize these processes as discursive, strategic and contested. The discursive process involves the unification of members’ common experiences and shared events and the highlighting of the most striking experiences and events as symbols of the members’ movement. The strategic process develops frames in order to achieve specific purposes and goals such as the recruitment of members or the acquisition of resources, and aligns frames through the linking of major ideas, through the idealization of ideas, through the extension of ideas and finally through the transformation and generation of new ideas. The contested process takes three major forms and can be the counter-framing of identity by opponents or the public opinion in general, the internal dispute among the members, and dialectic tension between the frames and the actual activities and events of collective action.

### 3.3. Types of social movements

As cited in Cohen and Rai (2000:2), Aberle and Wilson provide a typology of social movements that can be:

- i. Transformative movements that aim at changing the total social structure by using often violent practices, and by anticipating some kind of cataclysmic change; examples are the political left and the fundamentalist movements that usually have fanatical followers
- ii. Reformative movements that concentrate on partial changes in an attempt to offset injustices and inequalities and that aim at creating social order
- iii. Redemptive movements that argue that an individual's problems are isolated from their social context and attribute the individual's well being to the changing global environment; examples are religious movements that argue that an individual's well being is not incompatible with the global ambitions and wide reach of such movements
- iv. Alternative movements that support sustainable alternative lifestyles and reject materialism and conventional lifestyles; examples are the youth movements of the 1960's and the environmental social movements

Cohen and Rai (2000:3) add that social movements do not necessarily fall in one of the aforementioned categories and that they are subject to change. In addition, social movements can be unpredictable since they do not always arise wherever they are expected, irrational since they do not aim always at the self-interest of its members, unreasonable since the aim at justification while flouting the law, and finally disorganized since they avoid formalizing their organisation (Byrne, 1997).

Anti-slavery, civil rights, anti-colonialism movements are some of the titles of old social movements that aimed at the fulfilment of specific group demands. These first movements were highly influenced by the urbanization that characterized the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. People with common grievances identified themselves with other people that aimed at similar goals. Other social processes and events like industrialization, the spreading of political ideas with the most important being the freedom of speech and associating, and the diffusion of mass communications, provided the basis for explaining the emergence of various types of movements. The most known contemporary social movements are the following:

- i. The labour movement that was initiated from the working classes of society and used violent ways of protest and of demand demonstration and has been closely connected with the generated hierarchies and bureaucracies that it has produced within its development (Fantasia and Stepan-Norris, 2004:571).

- ii. The women's movement that has been instrumental in improving the status of women globally by spearheading changes and raising awareness at a transnational level and by aiming at the equality of women under the law.
- iii. The religious movements that challenged the professional preaching of existing religions or according to the words of Sven Lidman, the leader of the Swedish Pentecost movement that emerged in the 1920s, "The appointment of professional preachers will be the beginning of the spiritual death of the movement."
- iv. The peace and antiwar movements whose expressed grievances concentrated on the nations' policies on national security (Marullo and Meyer, 2004: 643).
- v. The environmental movements that usually started as local based action groups that identified themselves with other groups who shared the same concerns and although resisting to formal organisation they comprised large movements with increasingly effective networks (Rootes, 2006).

### *3.3.1. Global social movements*

The global age highlights the need for global responses outside the national and state structures. The cheap communications and travel favour the emergence of global movements. In addition, the globalization of mass production and the political globalization underline the convergence of nations in certain values and ideologies. However, the aforementioned

convergence can reinforce politics of discrimination and disadvantage that without the opposition and protest of global social movement can eventually produce conventional politics in favour of global government politics (Glasius, 2004).

Cohen and Rai (2000:8) suggest that there are six major factors that “impel or permit some movements to go global”.

- i. The first factor refers to the major characteristic of the global age, which is the product of global decision-making processes and decisions taken at summits. Nevertheless, competitions and conflicts among global social movements may arise especially in cases of declining available resources, of declining membership, and declining institutional funding, as well as in cases of lack of co-operation and shared consensus about the mobilization of alliances ( Zald and McCarthy, 1979). In these cases that the global character of movements may inhibit the power relation among the movements, by posing the most influential and capable of ensuring resources obstacle at/by the premium of the decision- making processes.
- ii. The second factor identifies the large impact of flexible and cheap communication systems and travel possibilities that aid the organizing of social movements on a global scale.



However, Della Porta and Mosca (2005), question the computer-mediated communication in the global justice movement by highlighting the challenges that lie under the possibilities offered by this form of communication. In particular they refer to the generated alienation of the former face-to-face contact and to the hierarchies established by the control exercised by these parts of the movement that have the advantage of using these communications.

- iii. The next three factors are the impact of transnational activities that help local movements to make alliances within the scene of global movements and promote more efficiently their contests; example are the cases of the international labour movement and its co-operation with transnational labour bodies, the case of the environmental movement and its demonstration of local dangers that can harm the global climate, the human rights' movement and the universality of rights by virtue of human qualities, and the women's movement and the highlighted variation of gender inequality either in families or work but in all the societies. Global protests that involve transnational mobilizations are more likely to have an overall impact on global policies. However, it is argued that reflections on the positive impact of transnational networks ought to take into consideration also the fact that these networks adopt certain repertoires that do

not always coincide with the primary reasons for which movements are actually formed. . The literature focus on collective action generated through groups and transnational movements tends to ignore the ideological differences and internal tensions that may arise within these movements (Edelman, 2001: 309-311). Local demands do not always fit to the priorities of local informal groupings that may have common values and beliefs with their counterparts in the global scene, but may interpret inequalities and grievances in a completely other way.

Finally, the sixth factor considers the role of global movements to act as guarantors of democratization. This democratization does not merely refer to the struggle of ensuring equality at all levels of society according to the way that these notions are experienced in nations already democratized. Escobar (1992:47-48) is critical of the role of local struggle being conceived just as extensions of revolutions that happen globally, and argues that there are three discourses that offer three different possibilities for articulating the forms of local struggle that aim at democracy. The first possibility refers to the way that democracy is perceived to be fulfilled, the second is the cultural difference in which autonomy and self-determination are being perceived, and the third is the possibility of

searching for alternative ways of organizing democratic societies and healing the wounds caused by social inequalities of the past.

### *3.3.2. New social movements*

Contemporary social movements have fundamental differences from old movements in their ideology and goals, tactics, structure and participants (Pichardo, 1997: 414). Zirakzadeh (2002) argues that contemporary social movements comprise a group of people that aim at social order, that provide an outlet of expression for the non powerful, and that deploy confrontational and socially disruptive tactics. The transit from the old to the new social movements has as its milestone date the year 1989 when the end of a global conflict between the east and west was reached in the city of Berlin (Kaldor, 2003, 79). And this event supported the emergence of the transnational civic networks that connected non-governmental organisations, social movements and grass-roots organisations towards the accomplishment of specific goals.

A characteristic example is that of the Jubilee 2000 coalition ([www.jubileeresearch.org](http://www.jubileeresearch.org)). The call for the relief of non-payable debts in developing countries was launched in the mid 1990's by the UK Christian Aid agency. Major achievements were the 70.000 people human chain at the G8 summit in Birmingham in 1998 and the collection of twenty four million signatures. This movement had a clear mission and a deadline; the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000. Thereafter, the movement was constituted formally as a charity and works with grassroots organisations and development agencies

in forty seven countries in order to achieve the debt relief of the developing countries.

Calhun (1993:393-410) defines the goals of the new social movements as follows;

- i. They claim an autonomous identity and self-realization through the redefinition of their targets
- ii. They defend specific issues and have limited demands compared to the old social movements that aimed at the reconstruction of society as a whole
- iii. They politicize issues of everyday life by demonstrating the importance of everyday life aspects that did not have public recognition but were influencing segments of various movements(this sentence is not understood)
- iv. They do not mobilize on class lines and they are usually facilitated by middle-class affluences(this sentence is not understood)
- v. They support a non hierarchical structure and resist to the involvement of professionals in their operation by emphasizing the role of self-exemplification
- vi. They adopt unconventional means by operating outside the normal routines of politics and they achieve their goals through the continuous mobilization of their members.

Moreover, tactics refer to decisions on how to act. Jasper (1997: 237) states that “tactics, are rarely, if ever neutral means about which

protestors do not care”. The tactics or activities involved in any protest represent the characteristics of individuals’ personalities, and the vision that these individuals share. Members of social movements identify themselves politically through the demonstration of their tactics. New social movements employ new ways of communication, collaboration, and demonstration of their protests. The new information and communication technologies influence both the participation to social movements as well the mobilization of existing and new members.

In addition, Tilly (2003:4) underlines the significant changes in social movement development and claims that there are four factors that are affecting the claim to collective action. These four factors ought to be taken into account in order to rationally explain the new features and structures of social movements. Accordingly, new is the outcome of changes in the social and political contexts of social movements and not the result of the adoption of innovative technologies. Moreover, the role of communication is a two-sided role since on one hand it favours low-cost and fast- moving co-ordination among movements’ members that have access to these communications, but on the other hand it excludes completely members that do not have access to it. Tilly, argues further that the “local, regional and national forms of organisation” continue to be the most influential component for the development of movements by concluding though that the role of the globalization and anti-globalization dichotomy is not the event that “dominates the social movement scene”.

Furthermore, networking among individuals, which is achieved through for a, is a crucial prerequisite for the identification of social movements supporters and members. Fora offer the opportunity for meeting people in an organized manner/way and for sharing experiences and for formation of new strategies and movements (Marcuse, 2005: 423). Moreover, the development of social networks like Facebook and Twitter has given the participants of new social movements to easily promulgate their ideas and mobilize new participants (Shirky, 2008).

However, Frank and Fuentes (1987:1503) point out that most of the new social movements do not differ from the old, but they continue to be old with some new features. Apart from the environmental and the peace movement that can legitimately defined as new, since they correspond to contemporary social needs, other movements such as the labour, the nationalist, the religious and the feminist have existed throughout early European history by resurfacing in particular times and places.

#### 3.4. Social movement theory in the study of voluntary sector organisations

There three major views that concern the relationship between the social movements and the voluntary sector organisations (Glasius, 2004). The first view recognizes the voluntary organisations as the heart of social movements, the second emphasizes their achievement of identical goals through different methods, and the third represents the voluntary organisations as the tamed or institutionalized children of social movements. Taming refers to the adaptation of protestors' social demands and their integration into the political process. This institutionalization provides a

safety net and an important mechanism for the implementation of social agendas.

The theories of social movements and voluntary sector, may have different subjects of analysis but they all treat parallel issues of theoretical material (Geoghegan and Cox, 2001). Social movements' theory can contribute to the understanding of the voluntary or non-profit sector. Although they constitute distinct forms of organisation, voluntary agencies share common features with social movements.

According to the extent to which the demands of social movements are taken into consideration by the power-holders, result in social movements being tamed, integrated into the political process and institutionalized. This institutionalization gives access to voluntary and non-governmental organisations to become the important components through which the agenda of movements will be implemented.

Therefore, the understanding of the specific challenges faced by voluntary organisations involves consideration of movement theories that evolve through time and include important findings about organisational development. As Hasenfeld and Girdon (2005) suggest, the emergence of voluntary organisations can be explained according to the theoretical insight from the social movements' theory with regards to the recruitment of leaders, acquisition of resources and mobilization of members and supporters.

### *3.4.1. Leadership*

Leadership is defined as “the process of influencing others to facilitate the attainment of goals” (Stogdill, 1950:1). Depending on the adoption of leadership style that can either be transformational, transactional or laissez-faire (Eagly and Van Engen, 2003:573), there are differences in the way people are directed, aligned, motivated and inspired (Kotter, 1990:3-17; Zaleznik, 1977:126-135). The role of leadership in social movements’ theory has another context than that of a “stereotype public persona”, which social movements are often identified with (Ganz, 2009:510). Leadership in social movements is evident in every level of the movement and represents the collective voice of the movement’s members. Leaders of old social movements usually shared the same ethnicity or race with their supporters, like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, whereas leaders of the new transnational movements are being elected at various global forums or emerge at various protests of movements.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the key distinction of leadership from management is its different orientation to the issue of change. Leadership produces positive change, whereas management produces order and consistency (Kotter, 1990:3-17; Zaleznik, 1977:126-135). In the same sense the leaders of movements challenge the state and other institutions in order to promote changes and positive outcomes for the lives of their members (Fantasia and Stepan-Norris, 2004: 569-570).

The approach on leadership by contingency theorists underlines also the importance of situational factors that account for the proper match between a leader’s style and the degree to which the situations give control



and influence to the leader (Fiedler, 1996:245-248). As cited in Anheier (2005:163), Nanus and Dobbs identify four dimensions of non-profit leadership that, if combined with each other, provide a typology of non-profit leadership roles. Depending on the focus of leaders, that may be on internal, external, present or future aspects of organisations, non-profit leadership suggests that there is interdependence between leaders and situational variables. Likewise, the framing process of social movements is highly affected by the role of leaders' style and its appropriateness in every situation. Framing may promote leadership teams with the necessary educational skills and abilities to provide necessary resources at key organisational posts, or distribute the framing work to diverse leadership teams that can address a broader population and resources (Morris and Stagenborg, 2004:184).

Finally, Morris and Stagenburg (2004:176-177) address the role of gender inequality especially in top levels of leadership in social movements by citing Robnett's argument that women are the "bridge leaders" of movements, in the sense that they act as intermediates, especially during emotional situations, among the dominant leadership and the members of the movements. However, ad Morris and Stagenburg further suggest this line of argument neglects the notion of leadership in social movements, which is diffused in different layers of the movements' organisation, and that recognizes the equality among the different types of leadership like the inspirational type, the developmental type and the strategic type.

### *3.4.2. Organisation*

Mc Adam and Scott (2002:15) recognize the relationship between organisational studies and social movements' analysis. In order to illustrate their growing convergence they construct a framework within which they highlight the parallel components characterizing both the development of organisations and the emergence of social movements. The "institutional actors" or agents that promote an organisational structure resemble the groups and informal networks that build the basis of movements. Likewise, the "institutional logics" that are the principles guiding the operation of organisations are linked to the political opportunities according to which social movements attempt to reform existing systems. Finally, the "governance structures" are the mechanisms that regulate the organisational mechanisms, and have a strong affinity to the framing processes that guide the proposed lines of action within social movements.

In addition, Rao and Zald (2000) highlight the inadequacies of organisational and market failures that promote social movements and collective actions towards the creation of new organisational forms. In particular Rao and Zald (2000) argue that:

- i. New organisational forms are legitimized through social movement processes when organisational decisions affect the distribution of benefits among individuals. The negatively affected individuals coordinate in establishing new organisational forms to their benefit.

- ii. New organisational forms are produced by social movements when market mechanisms harm consumers either in the sense of limited or dishonest information and produce therefore negative externalities. Social movements promote the establishment of new organisations that reduce these externalities.
- iii. New organisational forms are produced by social movements when individuals are deprived of their rights to challenge existing management by their exclusion from accessing valuable information with regards to their interests.

Moreover, an increase in the organisational density of social movements is essential for their development and further resource acquisition (Minkoff, 1997: 795). Blumer (1969:8-29) describes the social movements' evolution as subject to a life cycle that entails also their bureaucratizing. Vague and ambiguous social movements become recognized organisations that are advocating in favour of the movements' aims and are offering services for the achievement of these aims. In addition, the institutional effects of social movements draw attention to their organisational characteristics. The communication of the movements' demands, through protests and other forms of action, aims both at sensitizing public opinion and at the support of the power-holders (Giugni, 1998:379). Public opinion can help movements meet their goals by invoking the responsiveness of decision-makers, and therefore advancing their legitimacy and reinforcing their organisation in order to address these demands.

Finally, the organisational consequences of social movements are also apparent in their relationship with the state. As cited in Amenta and Caren (2004: 468-469), Tarrow argues that the state can become the “fulcrum” through which focusing on and challenging the state ensures the organisation of social movements and their engagement in further collective actions. There are two ways in which the state may be used as a fulcrum. The first way was apparent through the following example by Burnstein as cited in Amenta and Caren (2004: 468-469): “In the United States equal employment opportunity laws provided advantages for the civil rights movements in fighting discrimination by private co-operations. By outlawing a set of practices and providing a legal remedy for class employees, they created another channel for protest, and by creating a bureaucracy that has influenced the outcomes of these legal cases, they have provided additional resources and legitimating for the movement.” The second way in which the state can be used as a fulcrum is through the organisation of transnational and legitimized protests of social movements that can act pressure on national governments for changes in their state policies.

#### *3.4.3. Mobilization*

The identification and recruitment of supporters and members who eventually become the activists of social movements is a component that can provide various explanations for the expectations that people have from their involvement in various activities within a movement. Snow and

Ekland-Olson (1980) draw on their findings in the study on the recruitment of people into social movements' organisations and conclude that there are two primary reasons that explain this recruitment. The first reason illustrates the importance of pre-existing ties of an individual with the aims of a movement and the second refers to the absence of alternative networks within which individuals are able to express their demands.

In addition, emotions can play a vital role in the mobilization of supporters. There are two kinds of emotions enclosed in the social movements' theory (Goodwin and Poletta, 2004; 416-423). The first kind refers to the reflex emotions that arise suddenly and are usually expressed irrationally. Examples are the fear, the anger and the surprise. The management of reflex emotions is especially useful for social movements' leadership that through strategic planning can use these emotions either to increase or decrease protest. The second kind of emotions persists usually for a longer period of time; examples are love, hate, respect and trust. These emotions that are called affective bonds provide the individuals' basic orientation in the world and produce positive feelings for other individuals that share these common bonds and negative feelings for individuals that either don't share or oppose to these bonds. Again, the mobilization of supporters is reinforced through the emphasis of these emotional ties.

Mc Adam (2002) identifies a sequence of three major mechanisms that explain the processes by which individuals are mobilized in order to take action:

- i. Attribution of threat or opportunity that corresponds to the emergence of a certain group that feels threatened by certain conditions and takes the opportunity to act in favour of its interests.
- ii. Social Appropriation that is the prerequisite of action and it is achieved through the creation of an “organisational vehicle” that will become the basis of and will support the identity of a movement.
- iii. Innovative action that is the final mechanism which shapes mobilization through the communication of signals to and orientation of other members.

Furthermore, by introducing the value-belief-norm theory, Stern and Kalof (1999) argue that there are three types of supporting a social movement. These types are different from each other and each type depends on the capabilities of each individual. By examining the case of environmental movement, the value-belief-norm theory distinguishes between the consumers' personal actions, the environmental policy support and acceptance, and the adoption of behaviours that are in accordance with the environmental movements' principles.

Finally, Klandermans (2004) evaluates the demand and supply of participation to social movements by analyzing the dynamics of each one according to the time and effort involved components. In particular, the demand side of participation is highly influenced by feelings of deprivation, inequality and injustice that motivate people to belong to a certain group and mobilize them to express these emotions. The supply side of

participation entails the communication of wanted changes that mobilize the supporters, the identification of demands among groups of people, and the construction of processes through which demands are projected.

### 3.5. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the concept of social movements. A summary of theories that could explain the emergence of social movements was provided in section 3.2. . The theories of grievance or collective action, of resource mobilization, of political process or opportunity, and of collective identity and framing were examined and provided insight into the various reasons that could explain the birth and development of social movements. Section 3.3. presented a typology of social movements and focused on global movements and the ways it seeks to change society at a global level, and the new movements that are centred around issues that go beyond the centred goals and objectives of old movements. Section 3.4. looked at the role of social movements' theory in the voluntary sector by examining the relevant issues of leadership, organisation and mobilization.

The aim of this review was to underline the contributively components of social movements' theory to the understanding of the change concept within the voluntary sector. The adopted methodological scheme for the examination of organisational changes within the Greek YWCA case is presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Research Methodology**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The Greek YWCA's case study was conducted by employing a qualitative research strategy approach, by recognizing the reality of the patterns characterizing the function of the organisation and by asserting that the examination of the observed phenomena ought to also take into consideration the meaning that social actors attribute to them. The employed qualitative research strategy was performed by conducting the research at the natural settings of the organisation, by collecting data in the form of pictures and testimonies, by making a personal interpretation of the data and by analyzing the data with focus on the participants' perceptions, ideas and personal experiences. All of the above suggest the core characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2003:181-182).

This chapter aims to describe the research process and explain the methodological approaches used to analyze the phenomenon of change in a voluntary organisation. Section 4.2. discusses the rationale behind the design of the research and provides an analysis of the case study design's strengths and limitations. Section 4.3. describes the integration of the selected research methods and highlights their different level of importance in the conduct of the research. Section 4.4. addresses the ethical issues of this research and provides an examination of the research compromises. Section 4.5 specifies how the useful data was obtained, and looks at the sampling and data collection techniques. Section 4.6. focuses on the analysis of the research findings. Section 4.7. reflects on the role of feminist research



in this study. Section 4.8. summarizes the key ideas throughout the chapters' sections and provides an overview of the second part of this research.

#### 4.2. Designing the case study

The dimension of this study is exploratory; it looks at theories of organisational learning and social movements, explains the role of the international set of expectations from the Greek YWCA and the anticipated organisational changes, and explores how the aforementioned theories can help us understand the nature and impact of these changes within the Greek YWCA.

In addition, the theoretical drive of this research is a combination of deductive and inductive approaches (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003:88). As Bryman (2004:9) suggests "...just as deduction entails an element of induction, the inductive process is likely to entail a modicum of deduction". Therefore, although theory guided the formulation of the research objectives, the analysis of the collected data has given new insight into the phenomenon of organisational change in the voluntary sector.

Finally, the approach of this research represents the critical realist social paradigm. The critical realist case study is considered an appropriate approach for "relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, inter-organisational relationships or nets of connected organisations" (Easton, 2010:118).

#### *4.2.1. Epistemological and ontological positions*

This research recognizes the reality of structural patterns, regularities and events characterizing the function of organisations. Moreover, this reality has an objective existence. Nevertheless, any facts and events observed may depend on this social reality but they are not solely determined by it. In other words, social phenomena are not always obvious and can be generated, described and explained by uncovering the various underlying social structures and mechanisms that influence them. The examination and explanation of these underlying structures and mechanisms can use neither the methods of empiricism, which state that the sources of knowledge are the senses of people, nor the methods of rationalism, which favour the mathematical and formal reasoning in the production of knowledge. Critical realism provides a synthesis of the above philosophical theories. This synthesis requires the stratification of social reality that allows researchers to access the different layers of reality – individual, interactive, and institutional (May, 2001:12) - to examine the behaviour and actions of people and finally to explain the generation of events in each of these layers. Therefore, the epistemological approach of critical realism helped in explaining and generating knowledge about the ontological component of organisations that may be characterized by a regular order, but whose reality is not always transparent and can be experienced and generated by uncovering its underlying structures.

This research's ontological position sees the organisations as meaningful components of the social world. The research topic under investigation of organisations compared to the ontology of other social institutions like society, community and family are characterized by

different properties (Drucker 1994:68). Societies, communities and families exist; organisations do. Their growing importance is explained by their ability to accelerate social changes, whereas the role of other institutions is mainly the maintenance of social stability. The major features of organisations are their special mission, their division of labour and tasks, and the production of new knowledge, goods and services. Organisations have certain procedural and operational rules and are usually hierarchical. The distinctive features and challenges of organisations suggest that organisational social reality has an objective existence which can be explained, however, by examining the meaning that social actors attribute to its existence. Therefore, the broad research area of the thesis suggests that the function of organisations also depends on the actions of individuals that take place in particular institutional contexts.

#### *4.2.2. The case study*

Case studies are most appropriate for the investigation of cases as they include a variety of factors and relationships, exclude biases of factors' and relationships' importance and have directly observable factors and relationships (Fidel, 1983:273). Case study is known as a triangulated research strategy (Stake, 1995:157). Denzin (1984:301-310) identified four types of triangulation: data source triangulation (stable data across different contexts), investigator triangulation (examination of a phenomenon by more than one investigator), theory triangulation (different theories interpreting the same results) and methodological triangulation (use of multiple methodological approaches).

Levy (2008:3-7) provides a typology of case studies that focuses on their research objectives: the idiographic case studies that are guided from theory provide an explanation or description of a case; the hypothesis generating case studies that examine one or multiple cases for the purpose of developing theories; the hypothesis testing cases that confirm or reject theories; and the plausibility probes that include illustrative case studies. Equally, case study research can be used in the following ways in order to build theories (Dooley, 2002:349-351): case application of a conceptualized theory, confirmation or rejection of a conceptualized theory, case application for the purpose of creating or advancing a conceptualized theory and the continuous refinement of a fully developed theory. Eisenhardt (1989:546-547) argues that theory building from cases corresponds to high validity because of intimate ties with evidence, to the likelihood of generating novel theory because of the reconciliation of evidence between literature and cases, and to the repeated verifications of hypotheses because theory is generated from evidence. Case selection techniques include the selective modes of sampling. In particular, there are seven major techniques each of which facilitates strategies for case analysis (Seawright and Gerring, 2008:296-306):

- i. The typical case or representative case
- ii. The diverse case
- iii. The extreme or unusual case
- iv. The deviant or “anomalous” case

- v. The influential or important case
- vi. The most similar case
- vii. The most different case

This research employed the single and typical case study design for the following three reasons: it is the ideal methodology for an in-depth investigation of an organisation (Sjoberg and Sjoberg, 1991:2), it can bring out the points of view of the participants to the study by the use of multiple sources of data (Stake, 1995:51), and it has the distinct advantage to provide an answer to the exploratory research question of this study that examines the perceptions of volunteers on the issue of organisational change. This study is an embedded case study (Yin, 2003:43) that involves more than one unit of analysis and that aims to focus on the volunteers' perceptions about their single organisation. The case study of the Greek YWCA is made up of the smaller cases of its local centres; cases that provide useful information about the interaction within the context of the Greek YWCA, that testify its complexity and that can describe certain activities within its environment (Stake, 1995: xi).

The limitations of the case study design mainly refer to issues of validity and reliability that are challenged in terms of the degree of objectivity and generalization. Major criticisms of the case study design refer to its lack of generalization and to its limited ability to build theory. Ever since its application, the case study methodology was not recognized as a scientific method at all (Lundberg, 1926:61). Stoecker (1991:88) argues that case study research fails to safeguard its internal and external

validity and that the use of different theoretical predictions in the analysis of a case fails to ensure the legitimacy of the case study research design. Flyvberg (2006:221) examines five major criticisms against case study research: the importance of theoretical knowledge over the one of the case study's practical knowledge, the limited contribution to scientific knowledge because of limited potential for generalization, the inability to build theory, the bias towards verification and the difficulty in summarizing. Campbell and Stanley (1966:6-7) criticize the case study research as research of "no scientific value" since it fails to maintain a degree of control by involving only a single case observed at one time only. However, Campbell (1975:178-193) provides answers to his previous dogmatic disagreement by presenting answers to earlier criticisms on matters of replication and generalization. Moreover, Thomas (2010:577) addresses the criticisms of generalization and theory by arguing that critics fail to acknowledge the contribution of a case study to the in-depth understanding of a problem and to the production of particular kinds of generalizations. In addition, Yin (2003:10) addresses the challenge of generalization by presenting the differences between analytical and statistical generalization and by arguing that analytical generalization of the empirical results of a case study and their comparison to existing theory can produce valid and reliable conclusions.

The case study of the Greek YWCA aimed at meeting the limitations of the case study research design by meeting the research challenges needed for the production of reliable and valid findings. The first major challenge refers to the time needed for the transcription and analysis of gathered data.

Transcription and analysis are time consuming. In addition, there are certain deficiencies in humans including analysts (Robson, 2002:460). In order to meet this challenge, research objectives narrowed the analysis of data according to the thematic material drawn from the literature review. The second challenge refers to ‘taken for granted’ opinions and beliefs. As May (2001:144) points out, personal accounts may not always be a genuine reflection of the interviewee’s experiences, but circumstantial events at the moment the interview is conducted. Furthermore, these accounts are presented at a moment when human interaction does not actually take place. To overcome this challenge, this case study employed supplementary qualitative methods that provided insight to the consistency of the interviewees’ accounts. The third challenge refers to the interpretation of reality, beliefs and opinions encompassing a case study. According to Mason (2002:191), a major challenge for interpretative approaches is the misrepresentation of the research participants’ perspectives. Validity and reliability, in this case, were further guaranteed by the addition of original testimonies and quotations.

#### 4.3. Integrating the research methods

Research methods are the tools for the collection of research data. They can involve the use of specific instruments such as questionnaires and surveys or the use of the researcher as an instrument whereby the researcher participates, listens and watches others. As Mason (2002:52) suggests, in qualitative research it is more accurate to refer to the generation of data rather to the collection of data, since most qualitative perspectives are

rejecting the role of the researcher as a neutral collector of information about the social world. Data sources in qualitative research are people, organisations, texts, settings, material or visual objects and any kind of people interaction. The methods most commonly used are qualitative interviewing, participant observation and the use of visual methods and documents. Depending on the research design of a study the different sources are accessed by different methods.

The case study of the Greek YWCA was performed by integrating the principal research method of semi-structured interviewing and the supplementary methods of participants' observation, documentary analysis and unstructured diaries where participants were asked to fill in their personal reflections after my field-visit.

#### *4.3.1. Interviewing*

Interviewing is one of the major methods used in qualitative research. Its main purpose is to offer insight into different people's opinions, beliefs, attitudes and experiences by conducting an interactive dialogue (Mason, 2002:65). The overall rationale of the interviewing method is to provide rich and detailed answers on any research topic. Moreover, during the course of an interview, new issues and new ideas may emerge that could further facilitate the analysis of any topic in question. In order to help these new issues and ideas to emerge, interviews in qualitative research tend to be less structured. During any dialogue interest focuses more on the interviewee's point of view and less on the conduction of a clear and scheduled interview that reflects the topics that the researcher needs to



cover. This flexibility yields in turn wider aspects on the topics in question as well as unexpected themes that can, however, be as important as the initial researcher's concerns.

There are four main types of interviews in social research. According to May (2001:121) knowledge can be produced by structured, semi-structured, unstructured or focused, and group-focus interviews. This research used the semi-structured type. Semi-structured interviews follow a predefined thematic guide, but can easily depart from it when there is a need for clarification or further interest in the interpretation of any stated opinions. This flexibility places an emphasis upon the particular issues and topics that the interviewee considers important and gives insight in relevant areas not addressed by the investigator.

The design of the interview schedule in this study was based on the prior work of Harris (1997) and Rochester (2000) on the topic of associational organisational challenges, since their work highlighted the external and internal challenges faced by voluntary associations and referred to the importance of balancing the two sets of challenges in order to operate efficiently and to preserve the organisational mission. In the case of the Greek YWCA, issues of conformity to the international organisation and issues of balance between the individuals' needs and their longer term goals were questioned in order to explore the required need for organisational changes.

The strength of the interview schedule encompassed three major issues. The first refers to the originality of the primary data. This contribution is a process that requires an open mind, time and effort and at

the same time aims at demonstrating a high level of scholarship. It is a product of personal facilities and thoughts and therefore it is authentic. The narratives and accounts of the words/views gathered are genuine, rich and fully descriptive of reality that can in turn provide good indicators for the validity of findings (Robson, 2002:273). The second refers to the disclosure of underlined issues that can be either resistant to observation or that could require intrusive involvement in people's lives. During the course of interviewing these issues become obvious and understandable through the deposition of meanings that interviewees attribute to them. Furthermore, these meanings are revealed without a sense of intrusive bias in the lives and interactions of the participant people. The third issue stresses the significance of organizing social events. Influenced by the epistemological and ontological considerations of critical realism, the method of interviewing seeks to uncover the way social realities are accomplished through human interaction and the way in which these interactions are generated. As Mason (2002:68) suggests, if a researcher's view is that knowledge and evidence are situational and interactive, then the interview itself gives a maximum opportunity for the construction of contextual knowledge. Moreover, reconstruction of events is possible through the examination of opinions on how certain events result into current situations and through the meanings that volunteers attribute to these social events.

The limitations of the interview schedule included the following three major issues. The first limitation refers to the procedure of interviewing and the possible misunderstandings that could be produced from this procedure. One example is that of the biased questions which in turn can lead to the extraction of

predetermined answers (Robson, 2002:274). In attempting to observe through interviewing the possible reactions of the interviewees and extracting the useful and required information, the real standpoint of the interviewees can be ignored and their authenticity can be put in jeopardy. The second limitation refers to the element of power that can be exercised either by the interviewer or the interviewee (Patton, 2002:306). In the case that the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee becomes a one way process produces feelings of anger or anxiety, then the danger of prejudice or preoccupation is likely to appear. The attempt to reveal certain issues and the refusal to be open to a different perspective refer to the element of power that characterizes most of the interviewing procedures. The third limitation refers to the obtaining of accurate information (Plummer, 2004:89). This is a limitation that refers to the inability of the interviewer to guarantee the trustworthy and accurate response of the interviewees. Although the consideration of this limitation is important and can be overcome with probing and concentration, the outcome depends heavily on the answers of the interviewees.

Since fieldwork and the examination of a case study do not refer to a single research method, this study integrated additionally the methods of observations, organisational and life documents (Plummer, 2004:282) that have further enriched the data extracted from the interviews.

#### *4.3.2. Observations, organisational and life documents*

The qualitative method of participant observation describes and explains the behaviour of people in their natural setting and on a frequent

basis. Data includes life or times gone by stories (usually tape recorded), photographs, material related to places (maps, brochures and schedules), observed activities of people and records of the researcher's insight. Records are field notes that can be classified according to Lofland and Lofland and Sanjek , as cited in Bryman (2004:308), into the following categories: mental notes (useful when inappropriate to be seen taking notes), jotted notes (written down to jog or refresh the researcher's memory at a later instance) and full field notes (detailed notes about events, people and conversations). Advantages of participant observation refer to the insight into matters that interviewees are unwilling to talk about (Becker, 1958:40) and to the provision of new data previously unknown to the researcher but of great importance for the research study. Jackson (1983:40) argues that the problems of participant observation concern data-handling and data analysis and presentation. If notes are not recorded at the point of time when observation takes place, then possible omissions will distort the validity of observational inferences. Moreover, analysis will require a conscious effort of objectivity and a clear understanding of the differences between reporting and interpreting observations.

This research used the qualitative method of participant observation in the context of facilitating me to gain access into the natural settings of the Greek YWCA local associations. Being a participant-observer (Mason, 2002:85) I obtained important material concerning the local centres' history and operation, identified key volunteers that were purposefully chosen to be interviewed, and enriched the findings of the interviews' analysis with more data.

In addition to the above, the ontological position of critical realism suggests that material like texts, documents and records and other visual material constitute important components of the social world. Sayer (2000:18) argues that “social phenomena such as actions, texts, institutions are concept dependent” in critical realism paradigm. Moreover, the epistemological position of critical realists calls for the interpretive reading of documents, assuming that documents represent the meaning of social activities attributed to them by social actors (Bryman, 2004:12). Documents are usually used in parallel with other methods of data collection. Mason (2002:108) suggests that documents are used in order to clarify “personal recollections” and other forms of data deriving either from interviews or observations. However, the focus on the function rather than on the content of documents can add validity and importance to their collection (Prior, 2008:821).

This new insight introduces new approaches that focus on the function and impact of documents on schemes of social interaction and social organisation. This research focused on the function of documents and on the way their production influenced the course of the voluntary action. The annual progress reports of the Greek YWCA along with the local centres’ reports concentrated on the production of accountability reports and positioned volunteers in a peripheral role. Moreover, the World YWCA official documents underlined the international driven need for change within the World YWCA movement. Finally, the life documents (Plummer, 2004: 282) of this research, that included photographs and volunteers’ personal notes, added more information to the orientation and characteristics of the Greek YWC. Therefore their collection was justified in the sense that

they could provide good arguments and justifications for the validity and reliability of data analysis.

#### 4.4. Safeguarding the participants and the data of this research

Robson (2002:66) argues that there is a distinction between ethics and morals. The latter refers to the accepted notions of right or wrong, whereas the first refers to what people ought to do. Every scientific study that involves human beings ought to be ethical and moral, ethical according to the institutionalized principles that guide a research, and moral according to the notions of truthful interpretation of what people say or do. Especially qualitative research that involves the collection of data from people and about people raises ethical issues that refer to harm, deception, lack of consent and confidentiality, and deprivation of privacy (Punch, 1998:281-282). Ethical considerations do not disappear once a research methodology is approved by the corresponding Ethics Committee. It is a continuous commitment of the researcher to ensure apart from the signing of a consent form, the engagement to all levels of consent before, during and after the research are fulfilled (Sin , 2005:277; Creswell, 2003:66-67). Finally, critical realist goals recognize that ethical responsibility is constrained by society's structures and mechanisms (Mingers, 2009:172). Researchers do not simply think and do the right thing, and they should not be judged by separating them from the context in which they work in. Critical realist ethics acknowledge the importance of social science in revealing false assertions and generating convenient explanations.

Researching entails three separate ethical considerations. According to Shaw (2008:400), there are the ethics of research design, fieldwork ethics and the ethics of qualitative data analysis and consequent use. Guillemin and Gillam (2004:263), suggest that there are three major dimensions of ethics in qualitative research: procedural ethics that refer to the approval from an ethics committee, the “ethics in practice” that pertain to everyday ethical issues, and the ethics of conduct that advert to specific codes informing of responsibilities of each research field.

#### *4.4.1. The ethics of research design or procedural ethics*

The Social Research Association’s guidelines (2003) intend to form the basis of an obligatory code of practice covering the conduct of social research. Among other obligations to the subjects of a research, the obligation to obtain an informed consent is one important obligation of the researchers before conducting any study. Carrying out research involving people should entail free participation or withdrawal from any subject at any stage of the research, the provision of detailed and appropriate information on the objectives and the structure of the research, the avoidance of misleading subjects, caution when dealing with vulnerable persons, and the legitimate access in cases when the permission of a “gatekeeper” is required. Finally, modifications to the informed consent can occur in cases when direct access to the person cannot be obtained, when researchers are using secondary records of people and when methodological requirements conflict with the requirement of informed consent. Nonetheless, it is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that any methodological advantages

will not favour the deception of the subjects and endanger the mutual trust between researchers and people.

Informed consent was designed according to the university's ethical guidelines and on the basis of ensuring the anonymity of the subjects as well as the confidentiality of the researcher, and after ethical approval from the Ethics Board of the university was granted. Taking into consideration the maintenance of data confidentiality gathered by semi-structured interviews, the importance of the clearance of this research project, the compliance of data keeping with data protection legislation, the obligations to the organisation that allowed access to organisational documents, the non-violation of the privacy of the volunteers in the local branches and the intended publication of findings, I was obliged to obtain the participants' consent to observe and interview (Appendix I).

#### *4.4.2. The ethics in practice or fieldwork ethics*

Carrying out social research according to an ethical manner means the balancing of a number of various principles in obtaining an informed consent. The Standing Committee on Ethics in Research of the British Psychological Society (2000) underlines the importance of information provided to participants before the commencement of any investigation. Participants should be fairly and clearly informed about the objectives and the overall aim of the investigation. Researchers should explain all aspects of their work in order to avoid misleading or possibly deceiving the participants. Investigation should not continue in cases where participants are in any doubt about the purposes of the process. Researchers must be



fully responsible in ensuring that the participation of their respondents is voluntary and that they are entitled to withdraw from the session at any point in time. Therefore, there is a need to clearly state the objective of the study that is going to be carried out as well as to answer any possible queries of the participants. Information should be clear in order to avoid deception of the interviewees, since deception can lead to discomfort and objection of the participants once the study has been completed. Withholding information in order to encourage willingness of interviewees to participate can evidently jeopardize the whole research project. Interviewees cannot be treated as objects of measurement without any respect for their personal opinions and beliefs. The creation of mutual respect, understanding and trust are the important factors when requiring informed consent.

In addition, being discreet is one of the major ethical responsibilities of the researcher. The ethics of observation entail the sensitivity of the research topic and the vulnerability and malleable role of the researched (Li, 2008:101). Apart from the challenge of egocentrism, participant observation entails the challenge of interference. The role of the active participant can raise questions regarding the involvement of the researcher and can have implications for the roles of the researched. Furthermore, researchers should use good judgment when deciding which activities they are going to participate in, since the attempt to remain neutral is untenable (Jackson, 1983:42). Although research is not value-free, the observers, as participants, cannot be sentiment- and sense- free; this can put in jeopardy the relationship between researcher and persons under observation. Finally, confidentiality should be guaranteed by the researcher in the informed

consent statement of the participant observation. As May (2001:61) argues: “The dilemmas that the researcher encounters are therefore not so different from those that we encounter in our everyday life. The difference is that those with whom the researcher interacts are not normally intimate friends”. That point noted, the social obligation of the researcher to respect the anonymity and privacy of the research subjects, is an essential ethical requirement.

This research aimed at the very beginning to ensure the transmission of a clear research strategy before, during and after the visits to the local centres. First of all, it was ensured that the participation of persons was voluntary and that they were entitled to withdraw from the session at any point in time. Therefore, it was of paramount importance, to clearly state the objective of the study that was being carried out as well as to the answering of any possible participant inquiries.

Information was clear in order to avoid deception of the subjects, since deception could have led to the discomfort and the objection of the interviewees once the study was finished. Withholding information in order to encourage the willingness of the subjects to cooperate could therefore have jeopardized the whole research project. Subjects were not treated only as measuring devices without any respect for their personal values and beliefs. The building of mutual respect, understanding and trust were the fundamental factors when requiring their informed consent.

#### *4.4.3. The ethics of data analysis and consequent use or ethics of conduct*

According to the Social Research Association's guidelines that were applied in conformity in this research, the release of any non- anonymous data should be agreed with the participants in advance in order to ensure the respect of the participants in the study. In any other cases, confidentiality should be safeguarded. Moreover, clause 33 of the British Parliament Data Protection Act 1998 refers to "research purposes", which also include statistical and historical purposes, as well as to the "relevant conditions" in relation to any processing of personal data. This clause refers to the compliance of research conducts to the Data Protection Principles and underlines the ways in which research can be affected by the Act. The principles are the following: firstly, data should be processed in such a way that no substantial damage or distress is caused to the data subjects and moreover so that no particular ideas, decisions or measures are supported with respect to particular individuals; secondly, research purposes must be specific and lawful and should not be considered as incompatible with the purposes for which they are collected; thirdly, personal data collected for research purposes may be kept indefinitely; fourthly, personal data must be processed and published in such a way that the data subjects are not identifiable; finally, the disclosure of personal data should only be revealed to data subjects or persons acting on their behalf, to any other person, for research purposes only and in situations when disclosure is inevitable and falls within the paragraphs of clause 33.

During this research it was expected that the dissemination of any findings will be carried out in a fully responsible way. Confidentiality should be pursued in a way as to minimize any potential harm and

discomfort to the participants. The benefits derived from the research should have outweighed any potential harm and discomfort. The concerns of relevant stakeholders and user groups with an interest in this investigation were taken into account. For example, in the case of the use of already existing secondary data kept by the organisation, although informed consent was not required, there might have been likely concerns about the reactions and interests of the subjects whose data was to be used. Therefore, information obtained, was recorded in such a manner that the subjects couldn't be identified. In addition, the security of raw and processed data was obtained electronically by its storage in the researcher's personal computer and in printed form was to be kept in the author's home office. Data and documents were coded so that if access was to be unlawfully gained to the computer and to the office, the identification of individuals would not be possible.

#### *4.4.4. Research compromises*

Conducting field research with people also entails the consideration of various and sometimes unexpected compromises that usually appear during the fieldwork. One of those refers to the overcoming of the suspicions of the interviewees that may result to the cautious responding of the interviewees (Hubbel, 2003: 196). I encountered suspicious behaviour on behalf of the volunteers, especially of the ones that were older in age. These suspicions

uncovered their anxiety that raised questions on the purpose of my visit and research and questioned the purpose of the interviews. In order to overcome

this obstacle, I provided these volunteers with more details that showed the purely academic character of my visit and in addition I aimed to conduct the interviews on other than the local centres' settings so as to ensure their comfort and ease.

A second compromise addresses the reduction of my research confidence and especially when the questions were criticized by the respondent even before attempting to answer them. Qualitative researchers are often criticized when presenting a view that the research participants did not like (Brown, 2010:242). During the conduct of this fieldwork, I came across two instances of criticism on the questions of the semi-structured interviews. In order to overcome a possible incidence that could produce anger and conflict, I acknowledged the possibility that the questions were ill perceived either because they were misunderstood or because they might have caused discomfort due to reasons unknown to me. And thereafter, I moved on to a different question.

Moreover, the need for reciprocity (Lather, 1986) can sometimes force respondents to answer in a specific way. This compromise referred mainly to the dilemma of extracting answers especially from interviewees that due to reasons of intimacy were unable to provide feedback to the questions. The need of receiving data sometimes required compromise that stressed the difficulty of extracting a purely spontaneous response. Finally, subjectivity is a methodological challenge (Olesen, 2012) that also reveals possible compromises that can occur during the fieldwork. I was often asked by the interviewees to provide insights into and comment on the issues that challenged the operation of the Greek YWCA. Although subjectivity was ensured in all research interactions, in order to ensure the comfort of the

participants I provided usually explanatory answers that seek to introduce literal meanings into unknown concepts. A frequent example was the question on whether accountability reports were something that was driven by an exercised control on behalf of the headquarters.

#### 4.5. Collecting the data

This research's fieldwork took place between October 2007 and April 2008. I visited nineteen of the twenty-seven local centres of YWCA. Seven of them were located in Athens, five in Thessaloniki and the rest in other parts of Greece. Before visiting, the heads of the local centres were contacted and were asked to confirm the dates of the visits. In addition, a personalized package was sent to each local branch that contained an explanatory paper on the research underway, copies of the interview questionnaire as well as the participant observation written consent forms and a blank diary that participants were kindly asked to fill in voluntarily with their personal reflections, questions and proposals on the topic under investigation. The agenda of each visit was designed according to the schedule of the volunteers and included interviews, observations of the local centres' governing boards' meetings, attendance to various social events and observation of the everyday activities of volunteers.

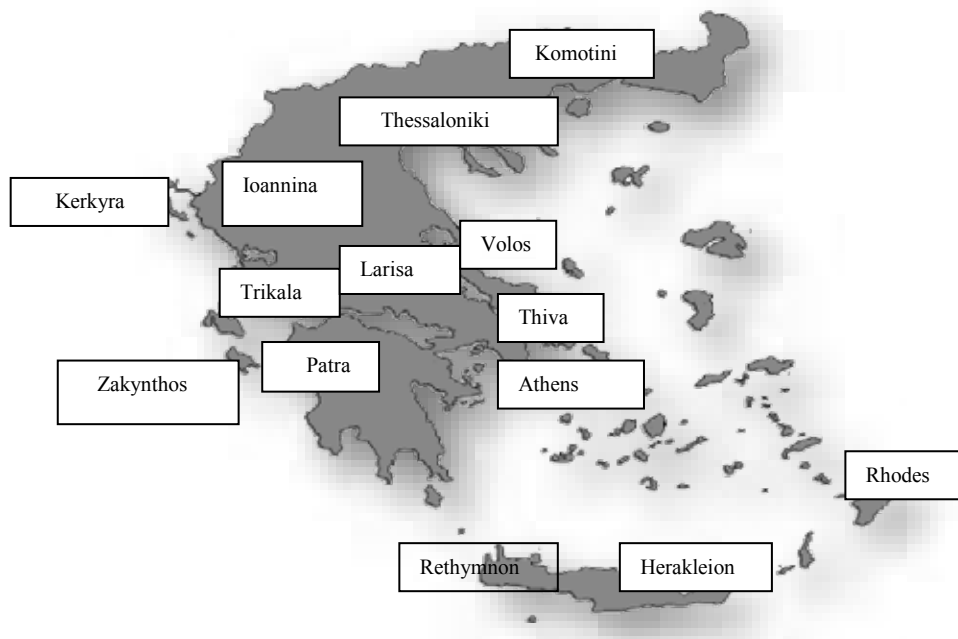


Figure 4.1. Local branches of Greek YWCA

In total, 45 individual and 10 group interviews were conducted. Bryman (2004:346) defined the focus group method as a “form of group interview in which there are several participants, there is an emphasis in the questioning of a particular fairly tightly defined topic; and the accent is upon interaction within the group and the joint construction of meaning”. In addition, as Gibbs (1997:2) argues: “... attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails”. Group interviews were not planned ahead but proposed by several volunteers either due to time constraints or because of the psychological discomfort of one-to-one interviewing. The interviewees were all women volunteers at the local branches of the Greek YWCA. The primary aim was to interview as many volunteers as possible, with diverse

geographical background and engagement to different levels of voluntary activity.

To meet the research objectives, purposive or judgmental as well as snowballing sample techniques were used. Marshall (1996:523) identified three broad sampling approaches for qualitative research; the convenience, the judgment and the theoretical samples. Convenience sampling is the least costly technique and involves the selection of the most accessible cases. The judgmental or purposive technique is the most well prepared technique since it is based on the researcher's broad knowledge of the topic under investigation and involves the selection of the most well-informed participants. Theoretical sampling refers to the use of several different samples for testing and re-testing of theories. Qualitative sampling is a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling; where snowball sampling is defined as the making of a contact with a small sample of participants who thereafter propose other participants (Saunders and Thornhill, 2003:175). I favoured the selection of the older and younger volunteers and asked the heads of the centres to suggest any other members. The process of interviewing was as follows:

1. After introducing myself, I explained the aim of my visit.
2. After obtaining the signed informed consent from the participants – in group interviews every volunteer was asked to sign separately an informed consent form- I informed the participants regarding the protection of their anonymity and the safeguarding of confidentiality, as well as for their right to withdraw from the interview at any stage.



3. Finally, I asked for permission to record the interviews and I informed about the right of the participants to ask to switch off the recorder if they wanted particular piece of information not to be recorded.

The decision to record the interviews was taken according to the suggestion of Heritage as cited in Bryman (2004:330) that stated the advantages of recording: it corrects the natural limitation of individual memory, allows a more thorough examination and repetition of answers, uses data secondary analysis, helps to counter accusations influenced by the researcher's personal biases, allows data to be reused in other ways. Recording was allowed by all the interviewees. The recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Greek into English. Although time-consuming generated data was rich and encompassed all aspects of the research's objectives. Nevertheless, an obvious limitation was the difficulty to reproduce the exact meaning of words and ideas from the one language into the other. Not only was the context of the opinions' wording interesting but also the way in which these opinions were expressed.

As far as the observations at the local centres of the Greek YWCA were concerned, sampling decisions were taken by taking into account the fact that "time and context" have to be considered as units in the context of sampling when undertaking participant observations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:36-39). Researchers have to interact with participants when they perform certain activities in a variety of contexts. The experience sampling method is the technique that requires the participants' responsible and voluntary contribution to data construction (Koro-Ljungberg and

McCormack Hale, 2008:339). Usually used in experimental sciences, this experience sampling method involves the participants' report on the nature of their experiences.

The process of participant observation was as follows:

1. After introducing myself, I explained the aim of the research.
2. Following the above, the signed informed consent form was obtained from the head of the local YWCA branch for entering to the centre's facilities and for observing the governing board's meetings
3. Field-notes and photos were taken while attending the activities of the local centres.

In addition, I was granted permission to enter all local centres and observe volunteers' activities. Moreover, I had the chance to dine with volunteers outside the YWCA settings and observe them in a different context.

Finally, other sources of data collected were organisational and official documents and life documents (Plummer, 2004:282). Official documents and all the materials were provided by the administrative staff of the Greek YWCA. They included the annual progress reports of the organisation since 1976, a commemorative publication for the fifty year anniversary of the YWCA (1923-1973), the codes of administrative practice of the local centres, the implementation guidelines of the organisation's social programs, circulars, newsletters and photographs of former and present YWCA members. Moreover, official documents of the World

YWCA were personally gathered while attending the World YWCA Council in 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. The life documents included photographs taken during the fieldwork that illustrated the current situation of the local centres and the profile of the volunteers, and the volunteers' personal reflections filled in an unstructured diary that was returned to me at the end of my fieldwork in April 2008.

#### 4.6. Analyzing the research findings

According to Collis and Hussey's analytical procedure (2003:262) the following steps were adhered to for the analysis of interviews:

1. transcription of interviews
2. coding of data by identifying key themes
3. grouping of codes into major categories according to the themes that arose
4. recording of data
5. interpretation of data and comparison of findings with existing literature

The transcription of the interviews was a process that required a lot of time especially in the transcription of group interviews during which it was sometimes difficult to distinguish the different points made by each one of the participants. A major help was the action of taking notes during the interviews (Patton, 2002: 383). This facilitated the formulation of an axis upon which the major themes were added and thereafter the parts of the interviews were filled in. Although time consuming, the transcription of interviews guaranteed the quality and authenticity of the data. In addition, it

was envisaged this primary data could be further used in a different research process.

Although the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software NVivo could speed up the processes of coding, grouping and comparing, I chose to conduct the analysis manually, since I viewed the analysis as being a continuous process and in constant relationship with data collection. Key themes emerged by taking into consideration their high frequency and importance underlined by the interviewees. In the addition of quotations and for reporting purposes, interviewees were classified according to two assigned numbers: the first one refers to their local centre and the second one to their individual number within this local centre. Therefore, if for example, a volunteer belonged to a local centre numbered 1 and was assigned by the researcher while interviewed the number 5, his individual code is IN 1.5. For group interviews only the number of the local centre was assigned; i.e. G 1. Observations that refer to the natural settings of a local centre were classified by the number assigned to this local centre; i.e. PO 1.

The classification of the categories of findings was performed according to the framework provided by the sum of the collected data. The major themes that have emerged produced a set of two categories that comprised a whole picture (Patton, 2002:466) of what is happening in the Greek YWCA. This set of categories was inclusive of the gathered information and obtained data and referred to the international and the national sets of expectations of the Greek YWCA.

The recording of data facilitated the analysis by summarizing the findings. In addition, its recording allowed for the reorganisation and the follow-up of the data at any point in the future.

Data was interpreted according to the cross-sectional and category indexing that underlined the pattern similarities found in the cross-national study of the Greek YWCA, and to the contextual, case study or holistic data organisation and explanatory logic that formed the analysis of the case study of the Greek YWCA according to the research objective (Mason, 2002: 150-168). The important themes and categories of the findings were compared with existing thematic material of the literature review. Organisational learning theory proposed the models and the processes that could describe the volunteers' perceptions and abilities to sense and accept the changes that are coming from its external environment and more specifically the World YWCA. Social movements' theory highlighted the major ways in which changes are being carried out or resisted. Given the fact that the Greek YWCA is an acknowledged member of the World YWCA movement and has supported at various times the Greek Women's Movement, the thematic material drawn from the social movements' theory provides useful insights in the form and type of organisational changes.

#### 4.7. Reflecting on the role of feminist research

According to Lather (1986:68), the goal of feminist research is the correction of both the "invisibility" and the "distortion" of female experience so as to put an end to the unequal social positioning of women.

Highly influenced by the importance of women's voices both within

the mainstream of the World YWCA and the local centres of the Greek YWCA, the gender lens has played an essential role in this research. The “voices” of the women volunteers and their placement within the organisational change processes, have helped in highlighting their interactive rather than a predicted role.

Feminist research attempts to correct the dominant methodologies that views social phenomena as fixed phenomena that could be explored through scientifically neutral methods and disregards the role of the participants in the research processes based on androcentric bias (Varga-Dobai, 2012:4; Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2006:18). The equality of the research relationship between the researcher and the participants is of eminent importance in feminist research since it can lead to helpful insight for women and construct meanings from a gendered experience. The case study of the Greek YWCA was designed according to the critical realism paradigm that stressed the importance of the perceptions and opinions of the women volunteers. In addition, the employment of a qualitative methodology combined with that of the principal research method that of the semi-structured interviewing highlighted the accepted reality of the role of the research participants in the research process.

In addition, the role of emotion has been taken into consideration while doing feminist research. When it comes to the responsibility arising from the emotionally engaged research (Blakely, 2007:63), researchers ought to recognize the fact that the research outcomes may represent a partial objective stance. However, this admission constitutes responsible knowledge since it locates the researcher within the research process and allows the researcher to understand

more about the meanings that participants attribute to the things around them. While performing the fieldwork of this research, I came across a lot of instances when my opinion about the challenges that the Greek YWCA is facing were identical to those of the volunteers. I experienced the problems of their daily routine at the local centres, I acknowledged their difficulty in meeting the requirements set forth by the World YWCA, and I shared their speculations about the future of the organisation. This identification produced in turn emotions that helped in capturing the underlying meanings of the social phenomena characterizing the Greek YWCA.

Finally, the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity as analyzed by feminist research offer insight into the selected research methods. Westmarland (2001) describes the objectivity/subjectivity dichotomy that corresponds to quantitative/qualitative difference, and argues that we should rather refer to situated knowledge and not to complete objectivity since “knowledge can never be regarded as universal”. Accordingly, feminist research techniques that may be more participant-friendly and that may be criticized as subjective techniques are valid since they aim at bringing the researcher closer to the reality of the participants’ perceptions and explain their feelings and experiences. The concept of subjectivity can help in the deconstruction of pre-assumptions about the background of the research participants (Varga-Dobai, 2012:12). In the case study of the Greek YWCA, the aspect of subjectivity helped me in recognizing the standpoint of the volunteers. I was able to interpret their assumptions by putting myself in their place and by recognizing the truth in their testimonies. Their experiences were unique and their propositions were justified. Instead of privileging the volunteers’ standpoint, the case study of the Greek YWCA

was a product of my subjectivity that was produced by the detailed analysis of the volunteers' voices (Millen, 1997:15).

#### 4.8. Conclusion

This chapter gives an account of the research design and the reasons for the use of selected qualitative research methods. This thesis' standpoint is based on the theory of critical realism by recognizing the reality of regularities and structural patterns observed in organisations and by ascertaining the fact that social phenomena ought to be examined and explained by taking into consideration the meaning that social actors attribute to them. The selected research methods for the case study research design included the principal qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews and the supplementary methods of participant observation and documents' analysis. The ethical considerations of the research entailed the clarification of the research project's purpose, the maintenance of confidentiality of data gathered by semi-structured interviews, the preservation of participants' anonymity and the non-violation of the privacy of volunteers in their local centres. The use of qualitative methods of analysis stressed the importance of an in-depth analysis of the data.

The second part of this thesis that is included in chapters five and six describes the most striking results that emerge from the gathered data. It presents the international set of expectations that concern the Greek YWCA, by highlighting the standpoint, challenges and opinions of the current



voluntary workforce. The organisational challenge of the modern YWCA that refers to new standards of working and performing and the corresponding opinions of the Greek YWCA volunteers are brought to light in chapter five. Chapter six illustrates the reality lying behind the operation of the Greek YWCA by emphasizing the changes which it has undergone as well as the challenges that it faces today.

## **Chapter 5: The World YWCA and the international set of expectations**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The World YWCA has been present in Greece since the Greek YWCA's establishment in 1923 when a Near East secretarial staff member was stationed in Athens for some months. Since then expert advice, visits and training-opportunity grants have been given when needed by the World YWCA. Furthermore, the Greek YWCA has given the World YWCA a president, Mrs. Athena Athanassiou, who from 1967 until 1975 served the organisation with dedication, extensive knowledge of the needs of women all over the world, perspicacity and hard work.

The World YWCA was present not only in Greece, but in several parts of the world, and facilitated the operation of its member-national associations. Nevertheless, the organisation recently acknowledged the major influence of innovation as well as the changing external environment of the international non-governmental organisations. Moreover, membership diversity and the differences in priorities and operational structure of the national associations underlined the need to revise the existing organisational framework of the World YWCA. During the recent Extraordinary World Council in Nairobi in 2007, the national associations voted in favour of changes in the constitution of the organisation. These changes entailed the exigency of the World YWCA to become an inclusive women's organisation, the reconciliation of standards of good management and accountability by the national associations and the presence of the YWCA in every part of the world. Furthermore, during the World Council

the organisation identified the future priorities of this world movement according to the needs of its national members.

The aforementioned shift has also had an impact on the organisational operations and the overall future orientation of the national associations. In particular, the Greek YWCA faced the great challenge of allocating twenty-five percent of executive and other decision-making positions to young women under the age of 30 years old. Facing the problem of young women's integration, the local centres of the Greek YWCA recorded their inability to adapt to this new orientation of the World Movement. As stated in the 2007 national report of the Greek YWCA, "the repetition of the same programs, the exhaustion of topics, and the saturation of a small group of people that desperately tries to serve its vision but fails to inspire this vision to the young generations, show an inauspicious perspective for the future of the organisation". The new constitutional amendment of the twenty-five percent prerequisite of young women within executive committees also entailed the future consideration of changing the membership status of national associations that would fail to comply with this new condition set forth by the World Council. Therefore, the impact of the new world strategic framework implied the need to consider drastic organisational changes within the Greek YWCA, in order to ensure its affiliation to the World YWCA.

This chapter presents the international set of expectations of the World Young Women's Christian Association. Section 5.2. describes a time journey by emphasizing the World YWCA's ability to respond since its founding to the problems of women around the globe. Section 5.3. presents the organisational challenge of the modern World YWCA. Section 5.4.

highlights the opinions and views of the Greek YWCA volunteers about the goals and priorities of the World Organisation that correspond and refer to the adoption of a new, alternative and professional organisational design. Section 5.5. summarizes the findings of this chapter.

In this chapter, as in the following chapter (Chapter 6), quotations of the Greek YWCA volunteers from the transcribed interviews are used in order to enliven the findings of this research with real illustrations. In addition, noted observations referring to real facts are used in order to further support the significance of the findings.

## 5.2. Historical Background of the World YWCA

It was in 1894, when Miss Annie M. Reynolds was appointed as the first General Secretary and took over her post at the London headquarters. Influenced by the social consequences of the industrial revolution and the entrance of women into the workforce, the World YWCA was founded so as to provide supportive services and educational opportunities to young women around the world. And it was in 1898 that during the first world conference of the YWCA, the principles and the aims of the association were sealed by three hundred twenty six participants from seventeen countries from around the world: “The object of the Association shall be the federation, development and extension of Young Women’s Christian Associations in all lands. The World’s YWCA seeks to unite those young women who, regard Lord Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour, according to the Holy Scriptures, are vitally united to him through the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and desire to associate their

efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among all young women by such means as are in accordance with the Word of God”. And from that time and onwards, a long journey, full of organisational challenges, began.

The first station was in 1914, when the ecumenical position of the organisation was questioned. There was a need to revise the constitutional articles that referred to the Christian faith. The world-wide expansion of the organisation brought up the issue of the YWCA’s relationship to Christians other than Christian Protestant denominations such as Eastern Orthodox, Armenian, Coptic and Roman Catholic Churches. In order to adapt to the requirements of this expansion, a new statement was adopted at the World’s Committee in 1914 in Stockholm, Sweden. The new principle stated that the World YWCA “desires to be representative of all sections of the Christian Church in so far as they accept the basis”.

The second station was December 1939. The World Executive Committee had to confront the consequences of an imminent world war and laid the new priorities of the organisation. Among them was the maintenance of regular contact with national associations, the continuous spreading of the Christian faith’s message, the preparation for the post war era and the extension of the organisation in regions not affected by the war (Seymour-Jones, 1994:19).

The third important station was the recognition of the importance of education, amended as a recommendation at the World Council of 1959 in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The development of education was acknowledged as a principal priority in order to increase women’s job opportunities and

strengthen their status in the global society. After the end of the World War II, women once more confronted the challenge to either accept or change their traditional role in society. Elaine Mary Davies (1991:84-85) describes the challenge as it was faced by the Montreal YWCA in Canada: “The YWCA of the 1940s and the 1950s was, therefore, strikingly different from that of the 1920s and 1930s. Its place in the community had shifted, yet, one should be careful not to interpret these changes as meaning that the YWCA’s support for women’s advancement was not as strong as in the 1920’s and 1930’s....a large part of that commitment entailed finding new and creative ways to promote women’s advancement within the constraints imposed by the larger Canadian society which appeared to only be able to accept a very traditional position for Canadian women.” The influence of the development of education guided the implementation of programs throughout the world. In India, for instance, the YWCA’s educational programs and training of young women aimed at the elimination of poverty and discrimination. The charitable model of work was substituted gradually by developmental policies that aimed at the empowerment of Indian women through education (YWCA of India and Wasi, M., 1971). Another example was that of Sierra Leone, where the International Labour Office financed the building of the YWCA vocational institute (ILO, 1970). Since its founding in 1915, the Sierra Leone YWCA has facilitated the access of young girls and women to schools and educational institutions, as well as the empowerment “of women and girls to promote the realization of their human rights whilst enhancing their abilities to take leadership roles to positively change their communities”.

The last stop of this time journey is the year 1975- the International Women's Year. The World Council took place in Vancouver, Canada. Matters of equality in education and employment were upgraded by matters of equality in decision- making processes. The organisation reflected on its past and rediscovered its identity. It has been a women's movement based on Christian love and aimed at the improvement of women's status. As stated at the World Council of 1975, the YWCA recognized the need to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women in the exercise of their civil, political and social rights. And as a reformatory social movement it aimed at the offset of injustice and inequality. The organisation was changing, because the world around it was changing too. According to the words of 1967-1975 World YWCA's Greek president, Athena Athanassiou: "By living their faith, by caring, by doing, women can step out of the shadows into the limelight, and stand in the vanguard of change." Or as said by the 1955-1978 World YWCA General Secretary, Elizabeth Palmer, the association was capable in meeting the challenge of being responsive to the changing needs of women (Anon., 2000).

### 5.3. The organisational challenge of the modern World YWCA

Highlighted in the recent annual report of the organisation (World YWCA Annual Report 2008-2009), the vision of the present YWCA is "a fully inclusive world where justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women's leadership". The revision of the organisation's constitution that took place in 2007 during the Extraordinary World Council in Nairobi, Kenya, was a

major organisational change that provided answers to the challenges of the modern YWCA. The World YWCA acknowledged that it had changed in size, membership and priorities' classification, since its founding that took place almost 150 years ago. In addition, it underlined the role of new technologies and the changing environment of the international non-governmental organisations. Influenced by the declining participation of young women, the diversity of affiliated associations and the barriers to the participation of women of other faiths due to the Christian basis of the organisation, the World YWCA World Council has appointed a taskforce, represented by members of 38 national associations worldwide, to review the challenges faced by the YWCA.

*“What does it mean to be ‘young’ when YWCA members are women of all ages? What does it mean to be women-focused when some YWCAs are joint YWCA-YMCA associations and others focus their community work on both girls and boys? What does it mean to be Christian-based when many YWCA members and staff come from different faiths? What does it mean to be a membership association and how do YWCAs sustain and grow membership to be representative and accountable to them and to the communities they serve? How do YWCAs balance accountability to members with accountability to donors and other partners of programs and services?”*

**World YWCA Governance Task Force Concept Paper, 2004**



### 5.3.1. Constitutional Changes

The aforementioned taskforce proposed changes to the constitution of the organisation that affected both the function as well as the spiritual direction of the YWCA's members. Among other amendments, the most important passed at the World Council in Nairobi (2007) were the following:

- i. The older version of the basis of the organisation – “Faith in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord and Saviour, and in the Holy Spirit”- was substituted by a simpler and wider definition: The World YWCA is founded and inspired by Christian faith. This change signified the need to become an inclusive women's organisation. The global agenda of women's problems was somehow identical for women that came from various religious backgrounds. Furthermore, the services provided by the local YWCAs did not aim solely at Christian women but to the members of the community regardless of religious beliefs. Consequently, the organisation ought to consider first the international impact of its constitutional basis and second an alternative way to become inclusive.

*“The YWCA is a very different organisation from that which began in England almost 150 years ago, in terms of its size, location, programs and policies, although we still trace our identity from our origins in the Christian faith as a women's membership movement committed to a better*

*world. A particular challenge for the YWCA is to express a clear, core vision while respecting the diversity of its growing membership of national association.”*

**World YWCA Governance Task Force Concept Paper, 2004**

- ii. Likewise, the criteria for affiliation of member associations have undergone major changes. The former list of conditions for affiliation – a Christian purpose in accordance with the basis and principles of the World YWCA, a membership organisation and a leadership commitment- was enriched and transformed to a more detailed and accountable list of clauses. In brief, the nominee affiliations should be led by women, of whom at least 25% must be aged thirty years and under, have a legal structure recognized by the laws of their origin and a constitution approved by the World YWCA.

*“The association shall be led by women committed to the purpose of the World YWCA, of whom at least 25% must be thirty (30) years and under.”*

**World YWCA Constitution, 2007, Article 10, Clause c**

Accordingly, the membership status of member associations can be changed in the case when members do not comply with the conditions set forth by the World Council. The new constitutional articles became stricter and more precise in their purpose, in order to ensure that member

associations will operate according to standards of good management and will be accountable for their obligations and responsibilities.

*“The World Board may suspend the membership of a member association for a specified period no longer than until the next World Council meeting if the World Board is of the opinion that a member association has seriously infringed standards of good management and accountability.”*

**World YWCA Constitution, 2007, Article 13**

- iii. Finally, the proposed new constitution entailed a fairer regional composition of the World Board- former World Executive Committee- which is the main decision making body for the World YWCA and the authorized representative committee for the implementation of the policies approved by the World Council every four years. Taking into consideration the augmented geographical diversity as well as the need to be present in every corner of the world, the World Board should include two representatives from each of the eight regions – Latin America, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Pacific, Africa, Caribbean, North America - plus an additional seat for each of the four larger regions.

### 5.3.2. *The new goals of the World YWCA*

Since YWCAs share the values of mutual respect, tolerance, diversity and inclusiveness, they seek to promote the development of young women's leadership, adapt to standards of good management and accountability, and represent their associations at various regional and international organisations.

As stated in the Strategic Framework of the organisation, the framework of the YWCA movement focuses on three main goals:

i. Leadership Development:

According to the 2008-2012 Strategic Framework the goal of leadership development and capacity building is “to build the leadership of women and girls to develop the most effective solutions to the issues affecting their lives and communities”. The role of the World YWCA entails the expansion of training opportunities, the insurance/assurance of a 25% minimum in decision making positions both at national and international levels, the facilitation of intercommunication and exchange of learning experiences and the strengthening of research tools. For the promotion of leadership, the World YWCA conveys a series of Regional Training Institutes under the theme of “Women Creating Safe and Secure Communities”. These training sessions take place according to a long-term schedule in the eight regions, where the YWCA is present.

*“A significant number of member associations struggle with the participation of younger women in the movement. Women between 31 and*

*40 years old can stand beside young women who also need space for leadership and empowerment. The YWCA needs more diversity in its membership and stronger continuity.*

*One mechanism for young women's engagement is a demonstrated commitment to their leadership development and recognition of their contributions. By valuing and supporting the leadership of women aged 31 to 40 years old, the YWCA communicates to young women that joining the YWCA movement means a*

*lifetime of leadership. Women aged 31 to 40 build bridges between young women and more experienced women and effectively recruit young women into the movement.*

*The YWCA values the contributions made by young women and is committed in investing in their potential as young women accept positions of increasing responsibility. As young women age, succession planning requires that the YWCA continue to prioritize the growth and development of leadership.*

*The World Council strongly recommends that:*

- *The World YWCA and all member associations will encourage and give voice to women between the ages of 31 and 40 by ensuring that they are represented on all decision-making bodies in order to build the bridge between the generations and also to ensure that the YWCA meets the needs of these women."*

**2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Recommendation adopted at the Legislative Meeting**

ii. Good Management and Accountability:

Equally important is the implementation of the constitutional requirement to adjust to specific standards of good management. The aim for the associations is to meet all of the following twelve standards within the next years: consistency with the World YWCA mission, lawful governance, inclusive membership, implementation of programs incorporating the organisation's priorities, oriented volunteer and personnel management, transparent financial management, fulfilment of financial obligations to the World YWCA, responsible management of properties and facilities, communication of the goals achieved, financial development, fundraising, and the purposeful establishment of partnerships with other non-governmental organisations, businesses or governmental agencies.

According to the Standards of Good Management and Accountability Code: "As a member of the World YWCA, a national YWCA has the constitutional requirement to safeguard the reputation of the World YWCA through the practice of good management and accountability, as well as to support and implement the policies adopted by the World Council. Through practicing ethical behaviours and reaching high standards of management and accountability, each YWCA will be working to maintain the credibility of every YWCA because the name YWCA carries a certain degree of quality and expected practices". The desired impact of this goal is to ensure the flexibility and responsiveness of the World YWCA movement to effective governance and management at all levels with core characteristics the cooperation, coordination and support.

*“Official reports to the World YWCA are generated every four years for World Council reports; often concerns or areas of need require attention during interim periods. An early indication of concern or need may mean that strategies could be implemented to prevent movement to a crisis situation. Preventive strategies could be identified from both internal and external sources. Unless there are direct communications among member organisations, assistance may only be provided when a crisis has been reached and the association recognizes that it does not have the internal resources to successfully manage the situation...The intent of this recommendation is to support practical steps to ensure that potential problems are identified and addressed at the early stages. Therefore it is recommended that:*

*The World YWCA and member associations regularly review performance against the Standards of Good Management and Accountability (SGMA) to ensure healthy associations and to identify to the World YWCA areas of potential concern and need.”*

## **2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya**

### **Recommendation adopted at the Legislative Meeting**

#### **iii. Advocacy and Services:**

The third goal of the World YWCA is to promote the advocacy and representation of women at national and international events. The term behind this mobilization is “empowerment”. Women are not only urged to access information and resources but also to contribute to the building of knowledge. The objectives of this goal refer to the advocacy for laws, policies and practices referring to and influencing the human rights of

women and children. In addition, this goal encompasses the great importance of accessing information, resources and services; an access that will enable women to claim their human rights as the right to reproductive and sexual health, and prevention, care and treatment of HIV and AIDS. Moreover, this goal highlights the provision of programs and services that correspond to the needs of children and women of all ages. Finally, it underlines the promotion of economic empowerment and women's participation in peace building.

In order to meet these targets, the World YWCA equips young women for the leadership challenge through internships and exchange programs. The YWCA Future Leaders Program is a long-term program that is designed according to the individual needs of each participant and aims at the educational and personal development.

*“Education gives women power, knowledge and skills. Education is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Education is a goal of the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union. Recognizing that education is one of the most important tools in empowering women and changing lives and communities, it is recommended that:*

*The World YWCA be a leading advocate for education and education issues.”*

**2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Recommendation adopted at the Legislative Meeting**



### *5.3.3. The new priorities of the World YWCA*

The future priorities of the organisation depict the specific needs of its members and seek to promote social, economic, cultural, religious and political justice. The World YWCA agenda focuses on four priority areas:

- i. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS
- ii. Violence Against Women, Human Rights
- iii. Peace with Justice
- iv. Economic Empowerment and Environmental Sustainability.

Global strategies are designed according to the above priorities, and underline the essential need for problem prevention. Moreover, global strategies will be strengthened by investing in education and counselling of young women that will ensure the development of corresponding services in their home countries.

The strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS aims at the creation of “safe spaces” for women, where they will be able to discuss and disclose the challenges they are facing. By acknowledging the individual and vulnerable character of each personal story, the YWCA seeks to provide spaces where women will feel free to learn and share their personal stories. The following abstract comes from the foreword by the former World YWCA General Secretary, Dr Musimbi Kanyoro, in the World YWCA’s publication “If I kept it to myself” that

documents inspiring stories of women's lives affected either directly or indirectly by HIV and AIDS.

*“Since the early 1990s HIV and AIDS have been a priority in many YWCAs. With sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS programs now operating in over 60 countries, health programs and community education strategies have been adapted to bring HIV and AIDS to the forefront of YWCA advocacy work at all levels. The World YWCA Global Strategy on HIV and AIDS provides the framework for these activities.*

*Our overall goal of educating women and girls around the world on HIV prevention methods and offering skills and tools to women already infected with HIV promote their lives to be healthier, longer and more productive. The YWCA believes that by providing safe places for open discussion around sex and sexuality, we contribute towards women in particular and people in general to regard HIV as a virus that we are all learning to live with, rather than seeing it as a punishment based on moral judgments.”*

The strategy on the elimination of all kinds of violence against women intends to end the stigmatization and discrimination of women and to integrate informative programs for men in the governmental agenda. Violence is not only a women's problem; it is the problem of society as a whole. As set forth in the priorities' advocacy agenda of the World YWCA:

*“Programs such as the YWCA Week Without Violence commemorated annually in November around the world help educate communities on the types of violence women in their country face. A society that understands the impact and effects of violence against women is better versed to address the issues at government and policy level. Education on violence against women must be integrated in programs that reach different sectors of society including men and boys.”*

The strategy on peace with justice is referring to these parts of the world that developed countries have forgotten. Not long ago, in 2008, parliamentary elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe ended up in violent conflicts. Actions are planned in order to ensure the protection of women in times of political insecurity and instability.

*“Women, girls and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflicts around the world.*

*The vital role of women and girls in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace- building and the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need for increased roles in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution, are upheld in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000).*

*Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls particularly as they relate to state constitutions, electoral systems, police and judiciary are crucial. Women and girls,*

*particularly in many African countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Angola are struggling to cope with armed conflicts or post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction as well as lacking democratic systems.*

*It is resolved that:*

*The World YWCA promotes the participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, and peace processes in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000).*

*The YWCAs are encouraged to provide civic education programs for women and girls' involvement in peace building and reconciliation as well as the promotion of women's equitable participation in democracy and monitoring of electoral processes".*

**2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Resolution adopted at the Legislative Meeting**

The YWCA's strategy on sustainable development is in accordance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015).

Access to

education and to a clean environment is the core of YWCA's framework of goals.

*"Women around the world ensure food production and water supplies. At the same time, global warming and the destruction of our planet*

*is a fact. Women will be the first persons affected by these problems and changing circumstances. It will lead to more poverty, lack of education, lack of access to health services, etc. Women, making up over half of the world's population, can have a strong impact and play a leading role in saving the environment and changing communities to do so.*

*Recognizing that in the proposed Strategic Framework 2008-2012, care for the environment is mentioned as one of the guiding values, it is recommend that:*

*The World YWCA adds an objective in the 'Advocacy and Services' section of its 'Program Focus' 2008-2012, namely: 'To promote a leading role of women and girls in caring for the environment, in respect of and responsibility to future generations'.*

**2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya**

**Recommendation adopted at the Legislative Meeting**

#### 5.4. The standpoint of the Greek YWCA's volunteers

We live in the age of globalization; decisions and policies are global; communications are global; production is global; values are global; goals are global. Every new idea, movement, need and value, needs a forum; a platform from which it will be able to discuss, negotiate, interact, inspire and aspire. The volunteers of the YWCA's local associations wear their "aprons" when working in their communities, their "pinafores" when

attending national conferences and their “overalls” when asked to implement the World YWCA’s priority programs. This changing “wardrobe” can cause disorientation, especially when the traditional patterns of organisation are replaced by technologically advanced ones.

Globalization has helped voluntary associations to raise awareness at a national level by using the global influence of networks. However, these networks are not necessarily harmonious, democratic or effective. In addition, their agenda becomes global through the evaluation of the most urgent claims. The power of local voluntary associations to decide is diminished as they enter into the franchise age of the voluntary sector.

*“I believe that the members of the Greek YWCA don’t keep the same pace with the priorities of the World YWCA. The women that are sent to the World Councils, come back full of new ideas. But not all these ideas can be applied in the local centres, due to the limited capabilities of the members or the high level of knowledge required for the implementation of programs. I don’t know how easy it would be to start a conversation about AIDS in our city. Although it is a priority of the World YWCA, I don’t know whether women at our centre could apprehend that. It would be nice for example to raise awareness in our community on the AIDS issue and maybe in partnership with the municipality or other agencies, but I am not sure whether we are eligible to start something like that.”* **IN 2.3.**

Volunteers of the Greek YWCA local centres questioned the way in which the Greek YWCA was directed or influenced by the World YWCA

and its goals and priorities; they questioned this relationship by posing the question whether the World YWCA was a partner or a patron. The volunteers felt that the power of their local associations was reduced as they entered into the new and modern era of the voluntary sector.

*“We were informed about the new priorities of the organisation. But we were not advised on how to implement them. They are very general and a little different from those that the members consider important. They talked about AIDS, trafficking...ok these are important too. But the ladies here are concerned with other issues. Unemployment, family life etc...I don't know whether we are obliged to follow these priorities or not. Are we members of or partners with the World YWCA?”* **IN 1.1.**

#### *5.4.1. Leadership*

The organisational structure of the Greek YWCA is an example of the organisation's commitment to develop women's leadership. The National Board is the supreme executive board of the organisation that elects the Governing Commission which in turn elects the National Presiding Board that implements the decisions of the organisation's basis. Apart from leadership development, the structure of the organisation favours the spread of the cumulative responsibility load by identifying the opportunities that all volunteers have in the management of the YWCA. The desired level of involvement is high for all members that are able to offer their recommendations and suggest ways in which plans can be implemented. However, a review of the recent annual reports of the YWCA

showed that the cumulative load undertaken by representatives in the development of new programs and directives are two of the major challenges identified in the field of leadership. Therefore, rather than empowering volunteers by including their access to decision-making processes, the current leaders of the YWCA tend to unintentionally undertake most of the managerial and coordinative work.

The regular conduct of meetings and their preparation have a great impact on the organisations' effective function. During these meetings, members of the council, the committee and the board present the work that is already done, analyze the reasons for the goals that are not met and decide upon future short-term or long-term goals. Members of the national presiding board regularly visit the local centres in order to check on the progress of work and to share new ideas or answer to questions that might arise during the implementation of any program. Nevertheless, the local centres are influenced by certain factors that hinder the development of local leaders. The informal relationship among members of the local communities may lead to the absence of commitment and avoidance of responsibilities. Therefore, the ambiguous role of the local board bodies indicates the lack of formal involvement and the need for strategic operational and support activities that should aim at the empowerment and motivation of local committee members.

The percentage of young women's participation- both volunteers and participants to the organisation's activities- is declining at such a rate that the presiding national governing body is seriously concerned with how to maintain the organisation within the Greek society in the years to come. During one of the recent national council meetings, the organisation



underlined the need of producing new programs of action that will take into consideration the “empowerment” of existing members and the education of new volunteers. The organisation was felt to be more subjected to the pressure of attracting and managing volunteers. The general decline in volunteer participation is no longer focused on personal characteristics but situational characteristics. In other words, the organisation recognized that it has to take into consideration the important factors that affected the decline in volunteerism and identify any factors that could transform the existing social capital of women into active civic action.

*“The goal of young leadership will be met in the long run, since it assumes the merging of certain steps and stages for its accomplishment. Major requirement is the collective understanding of the problem and its collective solution. It is underlined that under no circumstances, a greater importance or significance will be attributed to young leadership versus the older one. Young women are not eligible to achieve the goals without the presence, the co-operation and the experience of older women. The power and the solidarity must co-exist among the old and new members so as to shape the circumstances that will ensure the continuity of the organisation’s historical path. The YWCA is the largest women’s organisation that offers its services to women of all ages.*

*While preparing and empowering women towards a qualitative leadership, we have to:*

- *Change our current perceptions, the way that we were thinking until now and trust young people*

- *Create space and possibilities for women towards their maturity as leaders*
- *Create policies that will allow women to be the leaders of today and not only the leaders of tomorrow*
- *Refer with honesty to the obstacles that delimit, constrain and marginalize women inside and outside the organisation*

*The goal was and will continue to be the development of the leadership and the collective power of women and girls around the globe...”*

### **Greek YWCA National Annual Review 2008, Appendix**

The overall volunteers’ perception on leadership and its development was highly influenced by their opinion about the current organisational situation within the Greek YWCA. Most of the volunteers interviewed alluded to the role of the head of the national presiding board, whose role was considered ambiguous. There was no clear understanding of the roles of the headquarters’ paid administrative staff and the national presiding board’s unpaid members. In addition, reasons that hindered the development of leadership underlined the role of the current organisational ways of operation that did not favour the sharing of responsibilities but that were characterized by centralization. The review of the research findings exposed five major points concerning the development of leadership within the Greek YWCA.

- i. First, there was a sense that the understanding of the term “management” referred to the head of the presiding board and that it was consequently confused with the term “leadership”.

*“Unfortunately the head of this association regulates and decides. We have managers. We need leaders...They vote among them. Each time the president comes from this inner circle. This was the turn of MRS...” IN 1.1.*

*“I don’t know whether the local centres know exactly what the role of the Greek YWCA president is or that of the managing and paid staff is ...My understanding is during the last years the seats of the National Governing board are being recycled by the same persons. To me they are like managers; nothing to do with leaders of a social organisation...Sometimes I think that they act independently and don’t expect us to approve any of their actions...” G 17.*

*“I comprehend the national governing board as a stepmother....not that they are mean, but I feel that we speak a different language....the president has to be supported by the governing board and is not forced to undertake all the responsibilities of the board.” IN 13.1.*

- ii. Second, the aforementioned understanding was either not well accepted or justified in terms of sympathy. Respondents felt sorry about the heavy load of serious and important responsibilities of the association’s president.

*“Maybe now it is time to hire a manager. Someone who will discharge the current president from the heavy load of administration...so that the president will have more time to spend time at the local centres and empower women with her confidence and smile...” G 18.*

*“Today the load of the National Presiding Board is very heavy. I wouldn’t like to be in their position. I have a question also for you: What is the role of the paid staff at the headquarters? Aren’t they there in order to sort administrative things out? Relationship with the current president does not exist. Only women that attend the National Council have the chance to meet her.”* **G 16.**

*“The governance of the Greek YWCA depends heavily on the president. The organisation suffered because the governing board and the people supposed to support it were not enough to carry this whole thing out. They were inadequate to undertake the responsibility of the organisation.”*  
**IN 12.3.**

- iii. Third, there was an indication for the need of a visionary leader. The interviewees did not comment on the importance of young and modern leadership and stopped short at providing opinions on the virtues that a new leader might need to have. The findings revealed the image of a transformational leader that would have experience and favour unification, tolerance and democratic governance.

*“The current president is a little bit obscure; the presiding board as well. We know that they had a lot of issues on their minds while taking care of the YWCA’s property and this forced them to lose their contact with the organisation’s base...I envisage the new president differently. More inclusive, more tolerant, more understandable, more human...”* **IN 1.5.**

*“Everything must be done collectively. However, the leader matters too. Now you will ask me in what way, I would say that not only education is important. The leader must be aware of what the YWCA stands for. But this is not enough either; she needs something more...the aura...I don’t know how to express myself better...In any case a person that could unify the organisation again.”* **IN 10.5.**

*“I want a low profile leader. Someone who is more respectful and better handle the persons besides her.”* **IN 6. 2.**

*“The leader has to inspire and radiate. This is the only way to empower the tired voluntary workforce of the Greek YWCA.”* **G 14.**

- iv. Fourth, reasons that hindered the development of leadership included the profile of the current boards as well as their resistance to the implementation of new ideas. An additional observation made, referred to the fact that the majority of the members of local governing and national presiding boards were mostly over a certain age. Most of the members explained that their participation to the functioning of local boards was not out of their own choice but out of the necessity of having a governing board because of limited membership. The lack of a new voluntary force, willing to undertake executive responsibilities, makes the participation of the existing board members to be essential for prolonging the existence of the local centres.

*“We are busy with daily operational matters and we lose the essence of volunteerism. My term at our local governing board expires now and I am not willing to stand again. We are consumed with daily obligations and this causes anxiety and distortion...This is a heavy load for only five persons. This is the reason that no one wishes to enter into the governing board. I prefer to engage myself to a priority program of YWCA.” IN 11.1.*

- v. Finally, the members of governing boards revealed a sense of resistance whenever new programs or ideas were brought forward. When a member proposed a new idea for an innovative program, although welcomed with joy from the other members, the idea was noted but kept aside for future consideration. This reaction was considered as the natural outcome of the current way of operating since the current governing boards could not cope with the existing amount of work and would not engage themselves in the planning and implementation of new programs. This reaction, however, had a counter-effect and was disappointing to the members that had proposed something new, and maintained an unwelcoming and unattractive environment for new members.

*“There are a lot of groups within the Greek YWCA. Some of them favour the old operations while others favour innovation; others want changes without knowing what and how to change. My view is that a successful future leader will be able to unite all these different attitudes and*

*produce a new and healthy Greek YWCA. This person has to be educated and close to the organisation; but by far she has to be tolerant.” IN 19.2.*

**PO 19.** : A young member of the board proposed organizing an exhibition with the art works of YWCA members. According to the member, this exhibition could attract young women from the community for a first glimpse of the YWCA. The older members of the board expressed their interest in the idea, but brought forth a number of obstacles that could put into jeopardy the undertaking of such an activity.

*“We could do that...there are some constraints. For example, we wouldn’t like to be judged as a cultural association that promotes art...Our priorities are different.”*

#### *5.4.2. Good Management and Accountability*

The legal framework referring to the function of non-governmental organisations in Greece has been recently developed. The Greek YWCA is granted by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity with the professional Certification of the Primary Social Care Sector. In addition, every year it publishes its annual balance-sheet and accountability report. Still, the internal accountability reports submitted by the local centres raise concerns about the measures of performance applied when compiling these reports. Usually, local centres’ reports include an overview of the major programs offered and describe the way in which they are offered. There is no mentioning, however, of the numbers of volunteers involved in the program

or any difficulties that they may have identified before, during and after its implementation.

The Greek voluntary sector has been developing slowly and constantly for the past two decades. Many new organisations are being established and new aspects of volunteerism are being introduced. Although the mission and values of each organisation are clearly stated, the working models of each one of them is sometimes not well understood and implemented. Therefore, competition in the recruitment and retention of new volunteers is usually concerned with acknowledging the needs of volunteers and not the mission of each organisation. Voluntary jobs are designed according to the public perception of who is a volunteer and not to the ends that an organisation is trying to meet.

Within this competitive environment the Greek YWCA is struggling to strengthen or even alternate its programs in order to combine volunteer needs and interests with its mission and values. Nevertheless, the challenge of competition can have a negative impact on an organisation's characteristics, priorities and operational profile. Within a competitive environment the ranking of volunteer activity and the evaluation of this activity's relative benefits can provide a good indicator as to who is a volunteer in the public eye. In the case of the YWCA, local centres have placed much of their effort in adapting to this environment by promoting initiatives that neglect the priorities of the organisation. For example, cultural events and excursions were favoured more than the implementation of programs that were in accordance with the organisation's mission. And these preferences may further imply the transformation of the YWCA's character.



*“Careful and objective study of the local centres’ annual reviews ought to reflect the voluntary force of the Greek YWCA, and bring forth these elements that are the face of the organisation. Written texts produced by the responsible volunteers of the YWCA concerning activities at their local centres for the year 2005 and representing the collective evaluation of the Greek YWCA activities in the 27 centres in Greek territories, led to the following, not always positive, findings:*

- *The majority of the reviews are truthful records of the events and the circumstances observed in the local centres*
- *There are long descriptions of unimportant events, whereas essential actions according to the priorities of the organisation remain undisclosed*
- *Most of the described programs are the same known and successful programs of the past that are repeated out of habit*
- *There are few actions adapted to current reality and responding to the needs of the contemporary woman*
- *The cultural elements, and especially the open events in the community, instead of the themes-priorities of the organisation, are the ones that describe most of the programs*
- *Noticeable is the absence of imagination, flair, daring, and creativity from a voluntary force that gives the impression that it is tired, unwilling to change mentality, trapped in the cast of the past*
- *In all reviews it is underlined that the centres are not able to replenish their voluntary force, although this is the primary goal of the organisation.*

*All the above render the image of the Greek YWCA ambiguous and complicated, jeopardizing the identification of the organisation's special distinctiveness. Our common course is diverged and the YWCA does not differentiate from the other associations operating in each of the cities the organisation is present."*

### **Greek YWCA National Annual Review 2005**

Findings of this research gave insight into how the volunteers perceive the notion of accountability. Accountability was associated with annual reviews that volunteers gave/submitted to the National Council annually, where the centres described their actions and operations and expressed their opinions.

*"...We refer to all our programs; what we have done and what we have omitted. We record our good deeds, our needs and our drawbacks. What is right, is right...We don't criticize ourselves. We leave criticisms to them."* **G 3.**

Furthermore, the volunteers expected to see in the annual review of the National Organisation the transactions, the management of property and the new goals and priorities of the organisation. Consideration of the aforementioned issues reached the conclusion that accountability was thought to be an inter-organisational issue that referred only to the transparency of financial transactions and to the reporting of operations and concerned only the members of the Greek YWCA. The members are of the

opinion that these reports constituted the challenge of trust and inter-communication and felt that their accountability reports were the means for criticism on behalf of the National Council.

*“We have displayed on the front page of our review a picture...I don’t know whether they understood it. We were trying to show something. We expressed our thoughts, hopes and fears; the fact that we do not have a new voluntary force to replace the current board...And what have we got in return? Criticism of the local centre’s inability to operate correctly and according to the rules of the National Association... “ G 15.*

*“We have reported in writing our complaints in the past. They didn’t want to hear. There is not a deaf person than the person who does not want to hear. They are “deaf to the bone”. And so we decided to play along; we were reporting the things they wanted to hear. All our preceding reports were “bogus”. And because we ended up being what they wanted us to be, the Greek YWCA does not have any volunteers anymore.” G 16.*

*“We only hope for the implementation of the programs and we report everything in our annual report; we did that, we had so many participants....And then we receive criticism; why have you done this in that way and not in another way etc?...Exiguities...I don’t remember them giving us an account on what they have done, why they have done it and with what outcome. Ours is theirs and theirs is only theirs.” G 7.*

Finally, induced by the researcher’s question on the matter of accountability and its relation to funding possibilities, the volunteers

underlined the need to obtain more information about this organisational challenge.

*“Please tell us again why you referred to that? Yes the accountability report. To obtain funding...I think we have tried that in the past, but they needed more information. You know a more professional report.” G 3.*

*“We have never included proposals in our reports. At least our current governing board never did. We keep to formalities about our costs and revenues, descriptions of the programs.” IN 10.1.*

On the issue of standards of good management practices, the overall viewpoint underlined four major issues on their importance and influence as it was perceived by the respondents.

- i. The first one referred to the commonly cited “complaint” from the volunteers’ side that the heavy load of office work did not allow them to spend time on qualitative recruitment and empowerment of new members. The role for support from headquarters was underlined as an important factor for the attraction of new volunteers.

*“If we were granted with two or three social workers from headquarters we could develop programs for the recruitment of new volunteers... The National Board claims that the work of the YWCA is the education of volunteers. We don’t have time for that.” G 16.*

Moreover, this complaint highlighted the lack of professional support and training from headquarters in terms of financial and administrative management. The role of paid staff that could undertake most of the administrative duties of the governing boards was judged as crucial in order to overcome situations that may seem frustrating for the members of the boards, but easy tasks for professionals that know how to deal with these situations.

*“This is the reality. In order to stop that, the YWCA ought to find other solutions and employ staff to carry out the daily administrative tasks, so that the volunteers and especially those that are elected from the basis will contribute to the realization of the YWCA’s vision...this vision bogs down sometimes because you have so many problems to solve and there is nobody to help you out. We need facilitative services to encourage us to move on.”* **IN 8.3.**

*“We need staff that has the knowledge to address the problems arising from the application of priority programs. These problems can be either financial, or administrative and operational. There are special people for this kind of jobs. They have experience and know how to work things out. They don’t have to work full-time.”* **G 18.**

*“I recall a period when we faced tremendous financial problems and the help of the volunteers was not enough. We were obliged to hire an external accountant...Possible help of accounting services from headquarters could save us a lot of money. It is not possible for all the centres to successfully manage their financial obligations.”* **IN 2.1.**

- ii. The second aspect suggested that local centres were forced to “sacrifice” the implementation of programs according to the priorities of the organisation because they experienced lack of creative time. Instead of organizing and offering programs and services according to the priorities of the YWCA, the boards decided to implement programs that fulfilled the needs and wishes of their existing members. In addition, this decision was influenced more by the fact that desirable programs yielded more revenue easily for local branches.

*“We consume a lot of time and thought in order to figure out how we are going to ensure financial resources. The organisation of short excursions is a way to keep your members content and collect a substantial income at the same time. We know that these practices are not in accordance with our organisations’ priorities, but we need resources to pay our monthly expenses.” G 7.*

*“It is very difficult to organize programs around the priorities of the YWCA...The excursions and the events are not something that we seek to do; they are necessary activities since they generate revenues...The other day- my friends here remember- we had a quarrel about the programs of this coming year. We eventually chose a leisure activity rather than a developmental one; the first one will bring us money you know...and let me conclude, at the end of each year any revenue surplus goes to the headquarters to pay for our subscription.” G 9.*

*“...I would like to add something. Volunteerism is a noble philosophy. In order to become a volunteer, here, we need to firstly solve*

*the financial and the petty material issues at our centre and then occupy ourselves with these highly standardized issues...The existence of our local centre depends on the financial resources that come mainly from 'extracurricular' activities; otherwise we cannot operate...Apart from the above expenses, we pay also subscription to the National and the World Organisation. The roles have to be reversed."* **G 17.**

- iii. The third aspect referred to the important role of the professional staff. The local centres that employed staff for the secretariat relied heavily on their help and opinion concerning the running issues of their centres. Members acknowledged the essential role of the paid staff and expressed the will to even hire another one, if possible. They felt comfort in having a person taking care of the daily issues of their centres. The role of the professional staff was considered also as a characteristic of the wealthier local centres. For example, centres that offered a variety of services and programs and had therefore high revenues, employed staff that took care of most of the administrative work and seriously supported the work of the governing boards.

**PO 10.:** During the governing board meeting at this centre, the paid and efficient secretary came in the room for a couple of times. The president of the board consulted with the secretary on every matter that concerned administrative issues at the centre. It was noticed that

the secretary was aware of all the requests of the board, since the answers to all the questions of the board were prepared beforehand. A member of the board underlined the importance of the employed staff's contribution and stressed that it would be essential to consider hiring another employee.

*“We wouldn't be able to do anything without her. She knows how to deal with hundreds of issues that arise everyday...She knows what we need and when we need it. I don't think that we could cope without her”.*

However, not all local centres had the possibility of employing staff. Mainly due to economic constraints, the discussions around the hiring of a professional led to the conclusion that volunteers should eventually undertake all the administrative responsibilities.

**PO 9. :** The members of this board, tired of sorting out routine problems that concerned the maintenance of an old building, expressed the idea of finding someone who could take over these things. After this discussion it was decided that due to financial constraints, the members had to find an alternative solution. The president proposed the training of a volunteer for this job but again this idea was rejected because the members judged that it would be impossible for only one volunteer to undertake such a huge responsibility.

*“We thought of hiring someone in the past. The work of organizing all these things around here and being at the same time responsible for the*



*implementation and coordination of programs is too much for us...But a person like that would need a high salary. We hardly maintain this building... imagine if we had to provide for a monthly salary as well”.*

Finally, there was also a feeling of mistrust towards the role of professional staff. Boards questioned the reason behind the acquisition/hiring of a professional especially when this role was ambiguous and not well defined.

**PO 15.:** The members of this board thought that the current way of working and arranging the various responsibilities was preferable to the way that they observed in the operation of other organisations.

*“No, we don’t need other professionals...I was in another organisation before coming here. Full of professionals...They said ‘come in that time’, ‘do this and then do that’...We were like marionettes. No initiatives, no action, just following the schedule set forth by the professionals”.*

- iv. The fourth aspect underlined the essential role of partnership and co-operation with other voluntary and non-governmental organisations; an issue that was considered by the World YWCA movement as an essential ingredient for the recipe of successful social planning and action. The historical background reference to the importance of these kinds of

partnerships was proven true/effective during the following years, when co-operation with other agencies of the third sector through international meetings and co-operative adopted actions became an issue of proper and contemporary operation.

The findings of the interviews revealed that external partnerships or relations with the outside world were considered according to participant responses as an important organisational challenge. First of all they reported that partnership with local government was reported to and authorized by headquarters; the members of the latter gave the impression that partnerships were not favoured by the organisation.

*“I remember long ago, headquarters did not allow any cooperation with anyone. I once went to the university with my mother in law to a meeting of Greek Voluntary Organisation and I had an idea to open a channel for cooperation with the municipality and other agencies in the region...Oh! What happened when they found out! They (the national governing board) came up here quickly to berate us.” G 16.*

*“I believe that we are not eligible to come forward with any kind of partnership with governmental agencies. Once we attempted to do it and the ladies from headquarters said that they would have a look...no response since then.” G 3.*

*“The whole issue of partnership is a matter for the national governing board. They set the directions and we follow.” G 4.*

In addition, the volunteers testified a sense of alienation from the outside world due to their scepticism about the role of partnerships within their communities.

*“We are suspicious. I myself went to the prefecture in order to raise the issue for a grant...about a pioneering program for young women. You cannot imagine the end...we never got the grant and this same program was offered later on by the state.”* **IN 2.2.**

*“Unfortunately the YWCA is not known around here...Imagine that: we had a member that was attending to some educational programs here and one day she asked me ‘Isn’t this YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association)’? ...all this time she did not know in which organisation she was coming...Lately things changed. However, the philosophy remains the same; we don’t want the organisation to become famous through others. Their work, our work...There is no need to make things complicated.”* **IN 11.1.**

#### *5.4.3. Advocacy and Services*

The activities, services and offered programs of the Greek YWCA have changed throughout the years of its operation. The selection of programs was always in accordance with both the priorities set by the World YWCA and the needs and urgent demands of local societies. The orientation of Greek YWCA’s offered programs and services aims at the development of women through information about contemporary women’s problems. According to the charter of the Greek YWCA the main objectives and activities are as follows:

*“The Greek YWCA tries to inform and raise the awareness of its leadership on issues, which affect women and the societies in which they live. It seeks to develop women’s potential to act as responsible citizens. It acts in cooperation with other women’s groups and on the basis of present day conceptions of equality and solidarity.*

*The Greek YWCA trains women to practice modern methods of management and program planning and organizes action programs and services which give women the opportunity to : acquire the necessary skills and resources to enter or re-enter the job market, discover their talents, develop and upgrade their skills, pursue personal interests, use the services of professionally staffed counselling services, improve their understanding of Third World issues and how they relate to the international economic order, the causes and problems of population movement, the interdependence of the international community, and broaden their awareness of social issues as these impacts on local situations they meet in the course of their voluntary community work.”*

The World YWCA goal of advocacy and services was also emphasized by the volunteers who felt the need to express that they were actually capable of offering something to their communities. The contribution of the national programs –designed and proposed by the professional staff at headquarters- was considered ambiguous. In addition, the attraction of volunteers by other local associations -whose primary goal was the provision of immediate help to community members - has made the Greek YWCA members wonder whether they should change their orientation. Moreover, analysis of volunteers’ interviews uncovered the doubts about current Greek YWCA operations, focused on the change of the

organisation's orientation and underlined the importance of rediscovering current decisions. Members referred to the crucial need of implementing programs based on the priorities of the organisation; however they acknowledged that they consumed themselves with the organizing of either extracurricular activities like excursions and "tea" meetings or educational programs like the art of jeweller making or painting.

**PO 6.:** Facing the constraint of financial resources, the members of this board proclaimed at the beginning of the meeting, the importance of organizing and offering educational programs to the members of their community. Past experience and information on behalf of a member who could calculate the expected revenue from the running of each educational program was welcomed with joy and interest from the other members. At the end of the meeting the members reminded and committed themselves that during their next meeting they should engage themselves in the designation of programs according to the priorities of the YWCA.

*"We feel that at the moment we don't offer anything more interesting and worth mentioning and advertising than the excursions and other extracurricular activities. When women participate to these programs, we try to approach them and give them a new insight to the priorities of the Greek YWCA. Without success, of course...We go back to the familiar. Programs and services that provide revenues..."*

**PO 4. :** The governing board meeting of this centre was absorbed with the organisation of events and the evaluation of the events that

had taken place in the past. While referring to the implementation of programs according to the priorities set by the YWCA, an exasperating situation came to light and highlighted the avoidance of running priority programs due to lack of volunteer support. The members explained to each other that the sustainability of the centre depended on the resources of the offered educational programs and events, and therefore it was decided that this ought to be the priority of their centre.

*“There is no such thing as avoiding to run priority programs. We are stuck to the excursions and the events, because that is what people ask for. And we need their money for the operation of our centre.”*

*“...I’ll give you an example of what I am talking about. While attending to the Book Group, I envisaged that at the end of the discussion and sessions we would all gather around and decide how we could transform our knowledge into action. And the result was that: we read the book, and then we discussed about the book and then started a new book. No action, no mobilization. As if we were attending a reading class...that’s what is missing: the social action and the response to the practical needs of the contemporary woman.”* **IN 6.2.**

In addition, volunteers questioned whether the current national presiding board was actually aware of the impact that this shift in the organisation’s orientation had. Volunteers felt that the current head of the

Greek YWCA was, either intentionally or unintentionally, leading the association to the wrong direction.

*“The Greek YWCA operates only in order to satisfy the needs of its close and intimate members... It does not participate in solving the problems of vulnerable groups of people... instead of a social face it shows a hypocritical one to society.” IN 1.5.*

*“The YWCA failed to follow current developments. The national boards consolidated their strength and power at the headquarters and closed their ears to the voices of the local and community volunteers. The organisation gradually lost, then totally, its social face. Since they couldn't hear their members, they failed to hear the voices of women in need.” IN 19.5.*

*“If the organisation becomes truly useful for society, it will acquire a new prestige and therefore attract more volunteers. But this shift requires a new orientation and empowerment of the current volunteers.” IN 1.5.*

*The philosophy of the Greek YWCA is that women ought to come alone to the organisation. We are not entitled to proselytize.” IN 19.1.*

*“The Greek YWCA believes that by reaching the professional standards and by employing new specialized staff it will succeed in resolving its problem. How wrong they are...You watch a council of old women with their strict behaviour and professional style wanting to convince the rest of us that they did it; they succeeded in saving the organisation. For me, they failed. Instead of bringing forth their sensitivity and trying to sew up the unfolded, tattered and breaking into pieces trust, they hide behind their megalomania by preaching how the organisation*

*must operate and how the members ought to behave... Where is the social face of the Greek YWCA...? I have been there; I saw it in the past. Why and where we have buried it?" IN 13.1.*

The research data yielded two major practices that underlined the importance of services' offering: first, establishing tangible responses to women in need, and secondly, transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and supportive association. Volunteers highlighted the need of rediscovering what the YWCA stood for. They questioned the way in which current practices actually had an impact on their local societies. The first suggestion of the volunteers was based on their former experience in the social work of the organisation. In the past the support for vulnerable women was designed and offered through programs and services. Nowadays, the limited resources and support from the national YWCA has stopped further development of these programs, reflecting the lack of the social aspect of the organisation of society.

*"All of us think that there are a lot of new essential social topics that could have mobilized the Greek YWCA...In the past our centre had offered social services to women refugees. Then without support we were forced to change. But I recall that during those days the interest of new and young volunteers was tremendous. They liked to offer something that was tangible...We know that the YWCA is not a philanthropic union, but what is the point to say that you are developing women if these women just sit around and talk about the YWCA's priorities. We have to start applying our rich and useful knowledge." G 16.*



*“I stayed a lot of years at the YWCA boarding-house but it has gradually lost its clientele and the beds remain empty. I thought that we could take advantage of that and we created the ‘Home for abused women’. What can I say? We were working for the women. Weren’t we a woman’s organisation? And so everything started...I’ve done most of the work. I worked in close with other social agencies of this city...You can’t imagine how many women came. I co-operated with the police, with the hospitals, with the municipality. All women were welcomed; regardless of their religion and origin...It was a pioneering program of the eighties...But eventually we had to stop, we had no longer the right to keep the building given to us by the National Bank of Greece in 1937. The ‘Home’ closed and this was a shock for the local community. These women did not have any other place to go.”* **IN 8.2.**

*“The purpose of the YWCA is the support of vulnerable women who are excluded from social life in their local community... The national board ought to offer training to attract these women to our local centres.”* **IN 6.3.**

*“The Greek YWCA ought to find new ways to train women in order to bring forth, correctly, these actions that need to characterize the organisation...the promotion of volunteerism.”* **IN 6.2.**

The second suggestion concerned the development of a new orientation of the organisation that would highlight the transformation from an educational and informative role to a more supportive one.

*“We concentrate on the formal part and leave the essential outside. If the volunteers don’t come to us, let us go out and search for them. In*

*addition, let us show the sensitive side of the organisation outside. For example, find the mother of a prisoner and stand by her...give love. The serious face and the inflexibility of the organisation has brought us here...I envisage a new Greek YWCA with a social orientation and offer.” IN 1.1.*

*“Several times, I have thought to myself that we should ask headquarters to help us apply the following action. Since we knew that young women are usually occupied with the upbringing of their young children, we could organize baby-sitting for these women’s children here in our local centre, so they could attend YWCA programs. And this baby – sitting service could be offered for free, maybe undertaken by our current volunteers. However, these kind of things need organisation and motivation. I am not sure whether we have these qualities.” G 7.*

*“I lived for a long period of time abroad and I was a member of the YWCA there. I came to this centre with the conviction that I could equally receive here the same programs that I received there. Here things are different...For the Greek YWCA; volunteerism is not a way of social participation. They are more concerned with the offer of educational programs that are in line with the global priorities of the organisation.” IN 10.5.*

*“In the past we received training in order to volunteer properly, you know... We used to gather the children of foreigners and immigrants and teach them Greek, organize small events for them...I was feeling a useful person in my community... I was helped psychologically. I don’t know whether this is a YWCA priority, but this was the way that I experienced volunteerism in the past...” G 14.*

### 5.5. Conclusion

Although the historical mission and the priorities of the World YWCA have helped the organisation to meet several challenges in the past, current members are facing new challenges that need to be met, by surpassing of their current stalemate and by producing innovative strategies.

The review of the legislative statements, constitution and annual reports of the World YWCA set forth the new organisational challenges that underlined the need for inclusion, young leadership and global presence. The new goals of the organisation stressed the importance of leadership development, transnational maintenance of good standards of management and accountability, and the building of an advisory and service-model organisation.

The research findings revealed that the opinions, views and experiences of the Greek YWCA's volunteers did not coincide in their totality with the new orientation of the World Organisation. On the issue of leadership development the volunteers stressed the influence of the current organisational operations that hindered the development of leadership with the Greek YWCA. In addition, accountability was perceived as an inter-organisational issue that stressed the importance of transparency only between members of the Greek YWCA. Furthermore, volunteers resisted to administrative responsibilities and to the management of their local centres by arguing that they have volunteered in order to achieve their self-development. The findings suggested that the acquisition of paid staff that could undertake the management was favoured by the volunteers that wanted to concentrate on the developmental and not the operational tasks of

the organisation. Finally, volunteers questioned the way in which the organisational mission of the YWCA movement was served through the currently offered programs in Greece. The data underlined the importance of transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and service-model organisation.

The following chapter, chapter six focuses on the Greek YWCA and highlights the inter-organisational challenges of the current association.

## **Chapter 6: The Greek YWCA and the national set of expectations**

### **6.1. Introduction**

Initiated by the philanthropic virtue of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by the establishment of the importance of education, the Greek Women's Movement acknowledged the need to fight for women's political rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and concentrated on the social, family and health issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The unfolding of the Greek YWCA's historical background highlights the influence of the Greek Women's Movement both during the early years of the organisations' creation and the initial orientation of the offered services, as well as during the period within which the Greek YWCA experienced its greatest success and extraordinary presence within Greek society.

The contemporary organisation faces the problem of the recruitment and retention of new volunteers. The voluntary workforce has established a new cultural identity that differs from that of the past volunteers. The initial reasons for the establishment of the Greek YWCA's local centres do not correspond to the contemporary offered programs. The heavy load of duties of the local volunteers preserves a stagnancy status. Lodged mainly in old houses and small apartments, characterized by tired and unsupported governing boards and volunteers, the local branches of the Greek YWCA stress their expectations concerning the future operation of the organisation.

The brief presentation of the Greek Women's Movement along with the Greek YWCA's history, provides in section 6.2., the orientation of both the movements' interventions and the organisation's services towards the

establishment of women's rights and support. Section 6.3. describes the evolution and the current status of the Greek Voluntary Sector in order to present the environment in which the Greek YWCA was established and operates until now. Section 6.4. brings forward the characteristics of the contemporary Greek YWCA. Section 6.5. provides short biographies of eminent former Greek YWCA volunteers and offers insight into the culture of the current voluntary workforce. Section 6.5. gives an account of the internal set of associational challenges within the Greek YWCA by referring to the inability to operate efficiently and to the missing contribution and support of the Greek YWCA' headquarters to the local centres throughout Greece. Section 6.6. summarizes the major findings of this chapter.

In this chapter, quotations of the Greek YWCA volunteers from the transcribed interviews are used in order to enliven the findings of this research with real illustrations. In addition, the transcribed daily conversations (where R: researcher and V: volunteer), with volunteers inside and outside their settings along with the observation of volunteers while performing other duties, gave an additional insight into the associational challenges of the Greek YWCA.

## 6.2. The alignment of the Greek YWCA programs to the Greek Women's movement

The brief review of the Greek Women's Movement gives insight to the particular phases of the movement and to the specific challenges that Greek women met in the past. Moreover, this review helps in highlighting the

alignment of the Greek YWCA programs to the social challenges of women in the past.

#### *6.2.1. The early years*

Acknowledging the equality of citizens within its new territory, the Constitution of the newly established Greek state in the 1830's, included everyone but women living in Greece. Although access to all levels of education was allowed, it was not earlier than 1896 that the first two Greek women graduated from university. A typical feminist of her time, Kalliroi Paren "dares" to import feminist ideas and practices already employed for women and by governments in

various western countries. In 1888 she founded the first women's newspaper, the weekly "Journal of the Ladies" that published articles written solely by women. In parallel, she established a variety of philanthropic and educational women's clubs, some of which still exist and evolve today. The social status of women is accurately reflected in women's journals of that time (Vassileiadou, 1999) whose publication was short lived but highly influential.

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Greek Women's Movement shifted to the issue of work. Mainly without any insurance and with wages much lower than those paid to men, Greek women decided to claim their rights (Ziwgou-Karastergiou, 1999:14-15). They created the association "Woman's life" and the "Socialist Association of Greek Women". Following the equality at work, equal political rights were the next ones to be secured (Chronaki, 2002:5-9; Psara, 2002:10-13; Repousi, 2002:14-16). And it was in 1927 that women were allowed to vote in- but not to stand for - local

elections. The “Association for Women’s Rights” was the first exclusively feminist association and was founded in 1920. Since then it fought for the access of women to all professions, the establishment of gender equality and securing equal civil and political rights. It was during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that many women’s organisations were established in order to safeguard and promote the rights of women in Greece. Among them was also the Greek Young Women’s Christian Association.

The Greek YWCA was founded in 1923 by women who came to Greece from Asia Minor as refugees after the disastrous Greek-Turkish War (Clogg, 1992:99). Almost one and a half million people were then expatriated. These uprooted Greek women knew the organisation from their hometowns of Smyrna and Constantinople and they wanted to regain the feeling of fellowship they had experienced with YWCAs there. Soon after their arrival, together with a few local women, they formed a new YWCA. The most urgent needs for the thousands of refugees who were flooding the streets of Athens, the port of Piraeus, Thessalonica and every other town of the Greek mainland were: the need of migration services, the need for a hostel, a protected place from the inevitable dangers in the refugee camps, the need for a service centre. The first conference that led to the establishment of the organisation took place in the tailoring room of the Refugee’s Home Office. And the first dreams of the YWCA members became true when they were granted with a small room under the “Golden Stairs” of the old royal palace in Athens. And this is the place where the organisation began to run its first free programs: English and French language lessons, accounting, stenography and Greek language lessons for the illiterate. The lectures were given by volunteers, who themselves were refugees from Asia Minor. Food was provided for all the



girls that either studied or were just members of the organisation. Moreover, YWCA was the first organisation that set up a summer camp in a suburb near Athens. During the following fifteen years the YWCA in Athens and in the city of Thessalonica, offered services and programs such as hostel facilities with inexpensive food services , health and physical education programs, summer holiday camps, sewing lessons- which by that time were considered New Technologies- literacy night school for working girls, discussion groups and many others.

#### *6.2.2. The war years*

Any progress towards the political emancipation of the Greek women stopped as soon as the “clouds” of the World War II moved towards Greece. In 1939 when the country was ruled by dictatorship, the YWCA along with the YMCA, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides were disbanded. Organisations were asked to operate under the dictatorial control of the state and to cultivate ideals and visions set forth by the dictators. The members of the YWCA’s presiding board resigned and from then up to the end of World War II, the organisation was closed. During these difficult years, equality between men and women became a reality. Women had equal rights to fight against the enemy, to organize into revolutionary groups and to claim leadership of groups.

But as soon as the war ended, the civil war that followed, demolished the structures of equality. Political and social instability accompanied by the “bitterness” of a divided nation jeopardized any progress made by the Greek

Women's Movement. Family Law drafted before the war was put into practice: "The man is the head of the family and decides about everything. The woman should occupy herself only with household issues". In 1945, soon after the liberation from the fascist occupation, YWCA members got together, and decided to re-organize the association. The country was in ruins and a civil war broke out making it even more essential to try to live and work as a group despite the differing sympathies within the group. The YWCA played a substantial role in the reconciliation and reconstruction that were desperately needed during these years of hatred.

*"...Difficult years for this country. The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War had officially ended in 1945. Personally I spent 3 years in Egypt...When coming back to Greece I had to adjust to a very sad return, when it should have been joyful. Poverty, signs of the former occupation and a country bitterly divided...The phone rang and someone, who knew my family, was speaking about the women reconstructing the Greek YWCA. I said yes unconsciously. Everything was in scramble. Relationships and networks broken. We started from scratch. We rebuilt the Greek YWCA from the beginning."*

**Extract from a personal interview with the former World YWCA and Greek YWCA president, Mrs Athena Athanasiou, 2001**

### *6.2.3. The "Renaissance"*

In 1947 the national YWCA was reformed and more local groups emerged. The education, formal and non-formal, of women and girls was at the focus of the leaders' social action programs. The Greek national YWCA

was among the six Women's Organisations that set up ad hoc action coordination that sought the right of women to vote at the National Elections. The first such election took place in 1952. As a result, the first woman ever elected to sit in Parliament happened in that same year.

During the following years more and more women were called upon to fill places in the labour market. Women entered into the labour force of professions exercised mainly by men – judges, notaries and doctors. New opportunities were thus opened to women for social and economic development, and the Greek YWCA supported this development. A number of new professions were introduced into the job market, and it was the Greek YWCA the pioneering organisation, that through the creation of training programs and courses in social work, secretarial and librarian skills, arts and crafts, health and environmental protection, helped women to acquire the necessary skills. In the 50's, in co-operation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Greek Art & Craft Organisation, the YWCA organized an educational program for the advancement of women in rural areas and for the enrichment of traditional crafts production.

The year 1955 was a milestone for the Greek YWCA because of the opening of the new headquarters building in Athens. The program scope was enlarged. It gave possibilities and opportunities for experimental work. The School for Social Work and the School for Librarians were created in order to provide women with the necessary skills for the job market (Cominos, 1952:405; Krikelas, 1982:231). Today, both schools are part of the State's higher education system.

The military dictatorship (1967-1973) stopped the operation of all political and labour women's unions. Women were persecuted for their political and

feministic beliefs. Feminism was treated as an enemy equal to communism by the dictators because it threatened social stability. However, as soon as democracy was restored, the Greek women's movement became modern, adopted universal practices and took innovative initiatives. A known organisation of that time is the Women's Union of Greece established by a small group of feminine-conscious women. Its founding declaration, in 1976, emphasized the aim of the organisation that was the implementation of gender equality in all domains of life: "There is no social liberation without women's liberation" (Greek Women's Union, 2010).

Greece's ascension to the European Union (1982) highlighted a new era of feminist emancipation. Women felt free to discuss issues that Greek society considered taboo and adopted ideas and behaviours exercised by the Neo-feministic Movement in Europe and in the United States of America. Sexual revolution, single-parent families, family violence, breast cancer, domestic violence and psychological biases exercised on women, became daily issues of discussion. New organisations emerged. Moreover, the social service system in Greece entailed the service of four main groups: family and children, the elderly, disabled people and individuals at high risk of social exclusion (Economou, 2003:151). The Greek Women's Movement faced the challenges of women at work and political emancipation and reviewed women's roles within the family and broader society. Today, it is represented through the existence of voluntary associations that seek to provide answers and solutions to the problems of the contemporary woman.

### 6.3. The Greek voluntary sector

The evolution of the Greek Voluntary Sector resembles a lot to the one characterizing other Western European Models: from Christianity and philanthropy to the development of voluntary associations, and from the appearance of the welfare state to the decline of its effectiveness and influence and to the search of alternative social services providers. Today, the current Greek Voluntary Sector faces the challenges of innovation and change. The Chart of Social Responsibility of Civil Society Organisations provides a list of principles that characterize the constitution and operation of Third Sector Organisations. Composed by the “Citizens in Deed”; a governmental organisation that aims at constructing a regulatory framework for the Third Sector, the Chart provides the basic principles that should govern the operation and activities of any voluntary agency, which by signing this Chart accepts and commits itself towards the implementation of the principles included in the Chart.

The environment of the Greek YWCA is changing. Efficiency, effectiveness, competitions and partnerships are included in the new everyday vocabulary of the organisation. The aforementioned trends are also apparent in the annual reviews of the Greek YWCA that provide a detailed account of the organisation’s response to the new demands of third sector operations. Therefore, the association is confronting the broader challenge of questioning its standing solely on self-grounds when confronting women’s problems. In addition, the organisation is expected to redefine the effectiveness of its operations according to the standards of the Chart of Social Responsibility of Civil Society Organisations.

### *6.3.1. The history of the sector*

The findings of the research program VOLMED-HELLAS provided the basis and source for the review of the voluntary sector's evolution in Greece. Primary types of organized voluntary action are found in the early Christian communities in Greece. The motives of the first volunteers, within these communities, were love and philanthropy. Volunteerism was driven by the need of Christians to express their love to God by helping other people who were living in the same community. It aimed not only at the relief of the poor and the sick but also at the strengthening of their autonomy by teaching them a craft. This tradition was also present in the Byzantine Ages when volunteerism was considered as the major factor for the development and function of institutional social protection. In addition, volunteers were trained before offering their services to hospitals, workhouses and other institutions. This training was organized and supported by the state, the church and the monasteries and was concerned about the relief of the poor and the sick and the protection of vulnerable women, children and war victims. This Byzantine tradition continued during the years of the Ottoman Occupation (1453-1821). Leading figures of that time were the priests, monks and nuns of the Greek Orthodox Church who worked towards maintaining the Christian Orthodox faith and Greek culture. Finally, the financial support of the Greek communities abroad -especially those from other European countries- played a major role in the establishment of social welfare institutions in occupied Greece. Moreover, it was in one of these communities where the organisation "Filiki Etaireia" (Friendly Association) was established. This voluntary organisation was the one that supported the struggle for independence of the repressed Greeks and the establishment of the Greek State.

A new era for the voluntary sector begins since the fight for liberation from the Ottoman Empire in 1821 and the establishment of the Greek state in 1834. During this period, a new form of social intervention appears in Athens and in other cities. The leading figures of this intervention were educated and wealthy citizens that called their new social activity “philanthropy”. Philanthropy is organized through the contribution of local unions and associations and aims at the relief of the poor – especially children and women. The inability of the Greek state to exercise a national social policy and the absence of an organized social and labour movement are the major factors that encouraged the boost of philanthropy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Poor people should be integrated into Greek society and no longer be considered as illegal and dangerous. The philanthropists were those who organized this new type of social intervention. Multiple unions and charitable associations undertake the difficult mission of social integration (Korassidou, 1991). The establishment and the operation of these foundations were supported by the wealthy Greek communities in Europe, whose members were considered national benefactors, whereas the administration was undertaken by educated and wealthy Greek citizens. Influenced by similar activities organized and promoted throughout the Western European countries these citizens aimed at the integration of the poor into Greek society. Finally, the 19<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by another distinct philanthropic activity that was organized by wealthy and educated women. This philanthropic activity was aimed at the transmission of models that emphasize the role of the mother as the pedagogue within the family. In order to meet this end, the charitable trust of the “Ladies’ Union for women’s education” established a school for the education of poor women in 1872. In addition, a second important initiative

was that of Kalliroe Parren, who founded in 1892 the “Asylum of poor workers and housemaids” (Korassidou, 1991). This asylum offered a safe shelter and protection to poor girls that came from rural areas to Athens in order to become housemaids in the houses of wealthy families.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century is characterized by the same activities developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Greek state still relies on the philanthropic activities and the voluntary work of people who are trying to meet the important needs of social protection. The Greek – Turkish War and the uprooting of over a million refugees from Asia Minor had a great impact on the development of the voluntary sector. More non-governmental organisations, like the Greek Red Cross, were being established and smaller self-help groups, like the Greek YWCA, blossomed into larger associations. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, voluntary action was concerned with the provision of health and social services. In addition, cultural associations were being founded by refugees who wanted to preserve the “mores and morals” of their former home society in Asia Minor. However, in the 30s environmental organisations were capturing the interest of Greek society. Living a natural life and the protection of animals and plants were the major goals of these voluntary groups. The boys scout movement is one of the most important voluntary organisations that still offer services towards the protection of the environment (Apostolidis and Papaspyropoulos, 2002:178). In 1915, the Greek boy’s scouts worked on the tree planting of Athens, while in 1917 they offered substantial help to the victims of the big fire that destroyed the city of Thessalonica. It is worth mentioning that the founder of the Global Boys Scouts Movement, Lord Baden Powell, proclaimed the Greek Scouts as the only true Scouts around the world, after he was informed that the Greek



Scouts sacrificed themselves by denying abandoning unarmed civilians during the Greek-Turkish War in 1922.

During World War II, the Greek Orthodox Church and monasteries were playing the leading role in the provision of food, shelter and medicines. The rebuilding of the Greek state that takes place in the aftermath of World War II and the disastrous Civil War (1945-1949), underline the importance of voluntary action. The new problem was the mass relocation of Greeks into the large cities of Athens and Thessalonica that were not ready though to deal with the reception and social protection of this influx of population. However, the unstable political situation followed by the imposition of dictatorship in 1967, lead to the establishment of

another type of voluntary action with obvious ideological and political missions. The Greeks are more concerned with the restoration of democracy in their country and social, cultural and ecological organisations are no longer considered as important as they were in the past. Moreover, the emergence of the labour movement, the spread of communist ideals and the establishment of mutual assistance labour unions lead to a distortion of the real meaning of philanthropy and volunteerism. The political participation and the ascendancy of the Greek political parties were the two characteristics of Greek society since the restoration of democracy in 1974 and until the end of the 80's. This scene changed completely in the late 80s and the two sector model of the market and state, became a three sector model by the reappearance of voluntary and non-governmental organisations. Innovative programs were being promoted by voluntary organisations and later on adopted by the state. New organisations were being established and voluntary participation became a political act. The increasing interest in the third sector was

empowered by the crisis in the welfare state and its limited action, the crisis of political parties and the new law of the “freedom to associate” (Anthopoulos, 2000:51-65). The crisis of the welfare state and the limitations of state action lead to the search for an alternative to state action. The mobilization of the voluntary forces in society can contribute to the maintenance of social cohesion at a minimum cost for the state. Voluntary organisations are able to produce social services by developing the voluntary work of their members and by minimal financial support provided by the state. In addition, the crisis of the political parties and the low percentage of political participation lead to the search for of an alternative political action. This alternative is the voluntary sector that sensitizes public opinion, proposes new ways of social intervention and spreads the value of social solidarity. Finally, the “freedom to associate” acquires a new meaning that differs from its past and traditional defensive meaning adopted by the labour movement. The new dimension of “freedom to associate” emerges by way of supporting the citizen’s voluntary actions and the development of civil society.

### *6.3.2. Classification of the current Greek voluntary sector*

According to the findings of the VOLMED-HELLAS research program the geographic allocation of a sample consisting of 228 organisations showed that the majority of these organisations were in Athens (128) and Thessalonica (29), whereas the rest of these organisations in other major Greek cities (71). Therefore, the voluntary sector is developed more in urban than in rural areas. The importance of the unofficial care offered by the

family, the relatives and the church in rural areas was one of the reasons that hindered the establishment of voluntary associations in these areas.

Voluntary organisations can be classified according to several qualitative and quantitative criteria. The most common quantitative approaches are distinguished by reference to their geographic position, legal character, and thematic field and according to the number of their members. Qualitative approaches refer to the examination of their intervention role, decision making processes, mission, organisation, operation and strength of financial resources. According to Theodorakis and Stamatis (2007:18-22), the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods provides the following classification:

1. Voluntary organisations in the provision of social services: their key features are the provision of social services, their pure voluntary nature, and their local range of activity. Examples are blood-donor societies, support of cancer patients and friendship clubs.
2. Self-help groups: this category includes organisations that aim at the provision of solutions through the self-help of their members. Examples are the minority group associations, local cultural unions and associations for the support of the disabled.
3. International organisations in the provision of social services with local branches in Greece: through the maintenance of some degree of independence, these local branches adapt to the circumstances of the society in which they are operating by providing services and by promoting the priorities of

international organisations. Examples are Amnesty International, the Red Cross and Doctors of the World.

4. International organisations; networks of several interests with local branches in Greece: their primary role is the sensitization and mobilization of the society in which they are operating. Examples are the UNICEF and UNESCO local branches in Greece as well as environmental groups like WWF and Greenpeace.
5. Non-governmental organisations with several interests: these organisations are characterized by the combination of cultural and educational activities with philanthropy. Examples are women's philanthropic unions, pressure groups with a specific purpose, animal welfare groups and feminist organisations.
6. Religious unions: mainly organized and supported by the Greek Orthodox Church and characterized by the Christian values of solidarity and mutual aid, these unions are composed of volunteers and members of the clergy. Some of their activities are the provision of services to homeless people, drug-addicts and victims of domestic violence.
7. State unions and initiatives: these initiatives are concerned with the governmental agencies that organize volunteers within their employment framework. A good example is that of the organized participation of teachers in the provision of education of vulnerable groups of society.

8. Local and sectional governmental unions and initiatives: these initiatives refer to the programs of local administrative agencies accomplished by circumstantial or enacted volunteer's groups. Moreover, they include the support of activities with mutual aid character. An example is the organisation of local clubs for elderly people.
9. Emergency activities for emergency needs: they concern the mobilization of citizens for the provision of services to victims of emergency events. This mobilization includes the active participation through the supply work, money and other resources. Typical examples are the groups organized after the disastrous earthquake in Athens, in year 1999.
10. Non-for-profit foundations: the main characteristic of these foundations is the provision of donations and grants for several reasons and to various governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Aristotle Onassis (famous businessman and ship-owner) foundation is considered as one of the most prestigious foundations that provide among others student sponsorships and donations to mutual aid organisations.
11. European Union programs: there are three main ways by which volunteerism is supported and promoted by the European Union in Greece. The first refers to the financing of programs for social groups in need of help. The second is the major priorities of the "European Voluntary Service" for young people. It aims at the involvement of more young volunteers. The third is the generation of European networks

for the self-help of particular groups; for example the European Forum for disabled people.

12. Individual initiative from the for-profit sector (enterprises):

during the last two decades the private sector contributes through many ways to the provision of social care. Either by circumstantial provision or through partnership with voluntary organisations, companies contribute through donations, products and other resources to the activities of the Third Sector. A good example is the free private television's projection of volunteer organisations messages and calls for action.

*6.3.3. The chart of social responsibility of civil society organisations*

This chart provides the list of principles that dictate constitution and operation of third sector Organisations. The third sector includes Volunteer Organisations and its domain of action is between that of the State and of purely private enterprises. The chart is composed by the "Citizens in Deed"; a governmental organisation that aims at constructing a regulatory framework for the third sector. The chart subtends the basic principles that should govern the operation and activities of every voluntary agency, which by signing this chart accepts and commits itself towards the implementation of suggestions included in the principles. These principles are the following:

1. The principle of freedom: Any voluntary activity serves mutual aims, is conscientious and unselfish, and takes functions with the intention of offer and solidarity. It requires the free will and decision of the volunteer as well as the will of the person that receives the benefit of any voluntary action. It does not oblige the volunteer or the receiver under any circumstances and it should not create a relationship based on dependence and addiction. Therefore, any voluntary organisation should look after the required information, education and support of its members for the secure and effective conduct of voluntary activities. Moreover, it should recognize and reward the volunteer's contribution to the accomplishment of its goals.
2. The principle of transparency and accountability: This includes transparency in the decision-making process, in the origin and management of the resources, and in the adoption and actual implementation of the principles set forth in this chart. Every organisation should compile and publish an annual report of internal and external transactions as well as a financial balance-sheet and review, preferably compiled and checked by external auditors. It is presumed that the percentage of costs for the financing of activities for mutual aims must be notably higher than that of general and administrative expenditure. The principle of accountability and transparency is considered as a fundamental duty of volunteer organisations for expanding volunteerism.

The principle of democratic composition: Voluntary organisations should operate as self-existing legal entities and comply with the law and the Constitution, and should be governed by the principles of democratic composition and function. In particular, all members have to possess the same right of participation to the decision-making process which must be approved according to the principle of majority. Furthermore, member can become anyone who shares the same values and beliefs stated in the mission of any voluntary organisation. The individual amount of any subscription should not avert the participation of any potential volunteers but remain substantially low and encourage the enrolment of new members. Finally, voluntary action cannot be financially compensated and therefore volunteers are not allowed to receive salaries for performing their duties.

3. The principle of social solidarity: Voluntary organisations must aim at and exclusively serve the achievement of mutual, public and non-for-profit goals. Hence, their activities must be placed among the following sectors of civil action: development and humanitarian aid, human rights, people with disabilities, research-education, social solidarity-health- social provision, children's protection, environment, political protection, and culture. Moreover, an organisation can additionally provide support for similar/ mutual foundations whose activities lie within the aforementioned sectors.



4. The principle of social responsibility, liability and trust: This principle refers to the promotion and performance of activities, recognized by society as necessary and important in several sectors; particularly in the cases of social, cultural and environmental actions. Following their establishment and public announcement of their mission, voluntary organisations undertake the responsibility of ensuring the quality and the consequences of their actions. They enter “into a contract” with the members of society and must, therefore, advance and promote the ideas and values of social trust as well as the overall promotion of social capital.
5. The principle of social consultation, dialogue and trust: This principle encourages the participation of voluntary organisations in informing, enriching and formulating guidelines and other legal texts that concern issues of their operation. Partnership and development of social dialogue are essential for the promotion of social consent and participation.

In addition, the chart refers to the funding requirements of voluntary organisations. According to this article, any organisation wishing to apply for sponsorship should provide adequate documentation on the following:

- a. possession of technical knowledge and expertise
- b. internal system of secure and effective quality assurance
- c. A testimony that the members of the governing board have not been prosecuted and convicted for any illegal or criminal

actions; nevertheless, this requirement is not mandatory for organisations whose subject is the integration of socially excluded people.

#### 6.4. The contemporary Greek YWCA

As an acknowledged voluntary organisation, the Greek YWCA adopts the application of formal financial, organisational and management techniques and at the same time faces specific organisational challenges. It works towards the spread of the YWCA's ideas and mission; it shapes the general directives of the local centres and helps in the implementation of local programs and actions; it undertakes actions and programs in cooperation with governmental and other non-governmental agencies that aim at the protection of vulnerable populations and the further education of women.

The management of the organisation's resources- both financial and real estate- is done according to transparent financial methods and in accordance with the national committee's decisions. Specialist advice is taken in cases of real estate matters. Furthermore, the organisation's financial situation is published yearly on a balance sheet that is sent to all volunteers and to the statutory governmental agency. Most of the financial decisions involve investments that ensure the long-term existence and welfare of the YWCA. Although the history of the organisation is full of examples when the YWCA was granted funds from the government and the former Queen of Greece, today neither time nor effort is devoted in developing relationships with appropriate

funding bodies. The organisation is self-funded. However, the needs of the local centres are not always met when there is a possibility to obtain funding from local charitable trusts and governmental agencies. While the lack of expertise in obtaining funding could be easily overcome by acquiring the appropriate skills and information and by carefully choosing among the available funding sources, members of the local centres often fail to make effective use of external resources. Lack of time and confidence is the result of this failure.

The nature of authority that each volunteer has within the organisation is set forth by the organisational structure of the YWCA. The clear definitions of the council's, commission's and board's responsibilities imply the good management standards that characterize the organisation. In addition, the Greek YWCA is a network organisation and involves horizontal relations between the governing body and the volunteers. Group work is encouraged and both programs and activities of the organisation are designed according to the expressed needs of the local centres. The organisation could be characterized both as a "tent" and a "palace" organisation; it favours creativity and initiatives but at the same time values efficiency and permanent solutions to problems.

The management of volunteers may be implemented according to the responsibilities of the different administrative bodies, but there is a lack of clarity about the specific roles and the nature of the work undertaken by volunteers at the local YWCA centres. The small size of some local centres is considered as a barrier when defining the responsibilities of the members. The balance of the informal and formal is one of the key principles of small agencies' organisation. This principle suggests that there are not clear job descriptions,

there is a lack of initiatives and most importantly a difficulty in organizing the work that needs to be done more systematically. However, the challenge of managing staff is a challenge that requires the implementation of a good psychological strategy by YWCA headquarters, since volunteers are considered as the main work carriers within the local centres and have to remain satisfied with the time and work they are offering.

According to the following schematics there are four main groups of people in the organisational structure.

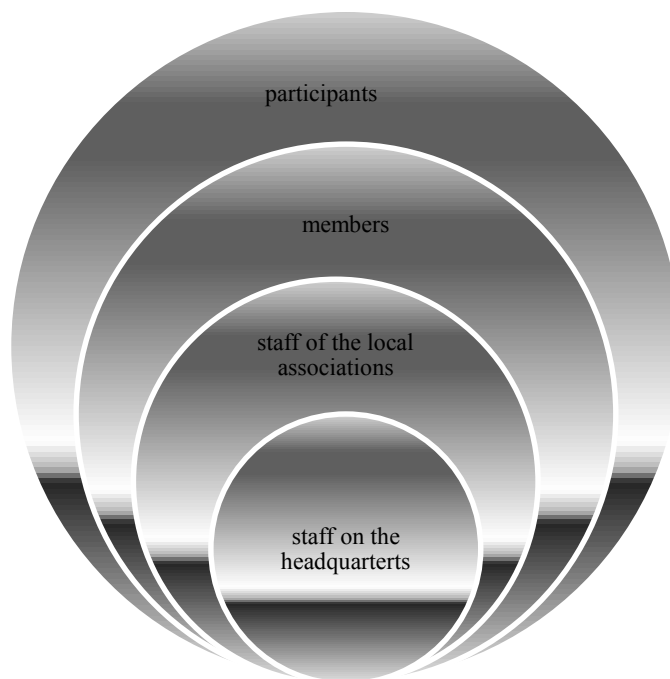


Figure 6.1. The organisational structure of the Greek YWCA

The first group is the participants to the priority or educational programs of a local branch. Examples are foreign women that attend to Greek

Language courses, gymnastics and other training courses and children that participate to the programs such as the Junior Environmentalists.

The second group is the members and volunteers of the local branches. They are women over the age of eighteen that are interested in the priorities and the aims of the Greek YWCA. They are subscribed members paying an annual fee to the local association to which they belong.

The third group refers to the staff of the organisation. This group consists of the voluntary and professional members of a local association that for a minimum period of two years assume responsibility for the association's administration as well as responsibilities for planning and developing the Greek YWCA priority programs. They take part in at least two national educational meetings and are eligible to participate in the National Board of the Greek YWCA.

The fourth and final group is the staff of the Greek YWCA or the staff of the headquarters. They serve in positions of high responsibility such as the President of the Greek YWCA, the members of the Governing Commission, the members of the Candidacy Commission and they are accountable for the development of the Greek YWCA program.

The percentage of young women's participation- both volunteers and participants to the organisation's activities- is declining at such a rate that the governing body is seriously concerned with how to maintain the organisation within the Greek society in the future. The decrease in percentage of volunteers and members in the local associations was obvious in their corresponding membership's lists. However, it wasn't clear whether the enlisted members were also actively participating in the daily operation of the branches or they were

just participants that followed specific offered programs and services. The distinction between a volunteer and a service member was blurred.

The following examples depict the gradual decrease since the founding of the particular local centres.

*“According to our recorded data the enlisted members in the YWCA of Athens during the period 1923 - 1955 were approximately 370. Since 1955 the number has been reduced at first to 350 and later to 250 which is the current number of members.”*

#### **YWCA Athens**

*“Until 1982, 250 members were being registered on a yearly basis. Since then, the number has declined to about 180.”*

#### **YWCA Piraeus**

*“The number of enlisted members since the establishment of the YWCA of Rhodes has been recorded as follows:*

*1947 - 1975: 100 members.*

*1975 - 2005: 200 members.*

*2005 - today: 100 members.”*

#### **YWCA Rhodes**

*“During the first 3 years of its establishment, the enlisted members of the YWCA of Glyfada were approximately 230. The number started rising in 1984 with 297 members and reached its peak in 1985 with 311 members. Since then the number of members has been gradually declining to 96.”*

### **YWCA Glyfada**

There was an obvious decline of more than half of the initial membership in several local branches.

*“In the beginning, a large number of registered members took part in the programs of our local association, this was approximately 500. Later on, the number declined to 300 members and during recent years we count 200 to 250 active members.”*

### **YWCA Palaio Faliro**

*“The number of our enlisted members was 190 in 2003 and declined to 88 in 2006.”*

### **YWCA Kerkyra**

Some local branches didn't have a catalogue of the enlisted members since their founding and could only provide an estimate of the members that participated in the operation of their centre. Finally, there were a lot of local centres that provided an overview of their membership since their founding, without providing in detail the actual numbers of the volunteers throughout the years of the centres' operation. The aforementioned remark demonstrated

that these local centres might actually lack information of their actual membership due to the absence of a database.

*“Our full members, who delegate the various committees, are 120-150 and our Executive Council consists of 10 members.”*

#### **YWCA Neo Faliro**

*“It is quite difficult to calculate the number of members in our Group, since there has been no data recorded on a yearly basis. Nowadays, our Group comprises of 72 active members, but it is worth mentioning that an almost double number, of friends follow our activities.”*

#### **YWCA Herakleion**

*“Our enlisted members who have been supporting and actively participating since the founding of our YWCA until nowadays are approximately 600, based on our recorded data.”*

#### **YWCA Volos**

*“We could not possibly provide exact data, since relocating from 11, Saint Sophia Street, in 1993 several books and archives have been lost.”*

#### **YWCA Thessaloniki**



During one of the recent national councils, the organisation underlined the need of producing new programs of action that will take into consideration the “empowerment” of existing members and the education of new volunteers. The organisation felt to be more subjected to the pressure of attracting and managing volunteers. The general decline in volunteer participation is no longer focused on personal characteristics but situational characteristics. In other words, the organisation recognized that it has to take into consideration the important factors that affected the decline in volunteerism and identify any factors that could transform the existing social capital of women into active civic action.

Although the recognition of this challenge is important, there is another challenge that the organisation has to meet as well. The processes of recruitment, retention and involvement of volunteers have to be designed not only according to the expectations and motives of the volunteers but in a manner that it is consistent with the goals of the organisation, and most importantly with its mission. Nevertheless, volunteers cannot be forced to do anything, they expect that their wishes and needs are going to be met by the organisation and after all they are working on a voluntary basis. There are different ways of involving volunteers and the selection of any particular technique or strategy has to take into account both the interests of volunteers and the organisational context and aims of the YWCA. In the chapter on the local centres of the YWCA’s 2006 annual report, members of the national presiding board question whether the way by which voluntary action was encouraged during recent years, led to the neglect of the organisation’s mission for the sake of volunteer’s personal satisfaction.

*“The action of the YWCA in the 27 centres in Greece is being transcribed with sincerity. However, the image that this action is presenting, as well as the orientation of the responsible governance, is confusing. Descriptions of events and programs that could be the subject of any cultural association, but whose cost in time and efforts was huge, occupy a large space in the centres’ reports....The responsibilities for the confusion that characterizes the action at the local centres belongs to everyone... But some of us are used in certain activities and we did not showed willingness in trying new things... We dedicated precious time in order to organize events with great resonance in our communities... We have put in jeopardy our status and our credibility in order to plan excursions and trips that satisfied only those that could participate. And at the end we found out that ‘we are still the same few women that wonder about the absence of different women other than ourselves that we could not approach; though we tried hard’.”*

**Greek YWCA, National Annual Review 2006**

6.5. The culture of the voluntary workforce

In emphasizing the differences in the characteristics of the past and the current voluntary force, one must also address the culture of the people that worked towards the mission of the YWCA in the past and those that are building up the current identity of the organisation.

### 6.5.1. Distinguished volunteers of the past

In order to outline the profile of a competent volunteer, the researcher asked, on several occasions, the members of the local centres to describe the profile of a distinguished volunteer that contributed, initially or during the operation of their association, to the overall organisation of their centre. The acquired profiles revealed that former distinguished volunteers shared the beliefs of offering and working towards the advancement of their communities through the reinforcement of the Greek YWCA's local centres.

Firstly, volunteers of some centres referred to figures that participated actively in the operations of their local centres while being at the same time mothers and spouses. The combination of family and voluntary work was characterized as a difficult task that required a lot of personal effort and love for volunteerism.

*“Yes, there is a woman, whose help at the YWCA of Spata has been very important. Ms. Anastasia George, who founded the local association and still works for it with great eagerness and voluntarism. She is the soul of our association, which she adores and cares for its renewal. Born in Spata, daughter of peasants, she graduated from high school in Spata. She married in Spate and has two children and five grandchildren. She participates actively in the YWCA of Spata, until today and is present at a variety of cultural events in our municipality, with the aim of upgrading and improving women's active participation in local affairs. Ms. George provides, when asked, her knowledge with great eagerness. She is an exemplar woman and*

*member of YWCA of Spata, in a continuous quest for a woman with self-confidence, knowledge, affection and mood for volunteer work.”*

### ***YWCA Spata***

Secondly, other local centres presented the figures of women that have given not only their precious time and personal work, but also donated houses that have ensured the existence of the local centres in which they participated for years.

*“We especially acknowledge the work of Mrs Elpida Vutira, whose contribution has been considerable. A woman who loved and helped for many years, especially when the YWCA of Thessaloniki was in its most times of need, in search of a roof. This is when Mrs Vutira donated the premises of 18, Mitropoleos Street, a two storey building to the YWCA of Thessaloniki. Elpida Vutira was born in Athens. In 1927, her family moved to Thessaloniki. After finishing school, she registered in Law School, and graduated in 1943, and was later appointed to the Bank of Greece. She married and decided to voluntarily retire from the Bank in order to raise her two sons and devote herself to her family and to the YWCA of Thessaloniki.”***YWCA Thessaloniki**

*“A great number of our members stand out for their ethos and dignity. It is worth referring to two of them: the remarkable Ms. Kaiti Laskaridou, founder of our Association, and Ms. Voula Theophanopoulou, who*

*bequeathed to us a remarkable building in Piraeus, which will eventually provide for the financial autonomy of our Association for years to come.”*

### ***YWCA Neo Faliro***

*“The contribution of Maria Dragona has been particularly important not only to YWCA, but also to the city of Piraeus. She was born in Piraeus and in 1903 married a famous merchant of Piraeus and became mother of 4 boys. Her love for Piraeus, the city which she was born in, raised, got married and raised her family in, as well as caring for her fellowmen, compelled her to the decision of donating her house to YWCA Greece, under the condition that a local YWCA would be established in Piraeus, where apart from all other programs, a boarding school should definitely operate.”*

### ***YWCA Piraeus***

Thirdly, volunteers highlighted the overall contribution of women who helped in founding and operating their local centre. They underlined the specific role that these women played in the political and professional world, pointing out in that way that these volunteers were active members of the society who at the same time believed in and encouraged the work of the Greek YWCA.

*“Maria Desylla was born in 1898 in Kerkyra. In 1956 she was elected municipal officer and head of the municipal council. In 1958 she won the municipal elections becoming thus the first woman ever elected Mayor in Greece. In addition, her offer in the social field was enormous. The Red Cross*

*was her most important field of action achieving her goals, through it. She greatly contributed in caring for injured people during the break of World War II, while in 1941 she was exiled along with her husband. For her time, she was a pioneer in founding Kerkyra's YWCA and helping women refugees."*

### ***YWCA Kerkyra***

*"The work and support of Ms. Athena Athanasiou was also great and lasted for approximately 40 years. Former member of the YWCA of Athens, daughter of an eminent politician, Ms. Athanassiou continued the work of another important member of the YWCA, Ms. Sofia Mavrokordatou. Since the late 1950s and with the help of several groups of volunteers, she promoted innovative programs for the education and training of women. Always aware of women's needs, she could enhance and develop the activities of the YWCA accordingly. She held the office of President of the World YWCA twice."*

### ***YWCA Athens***

Finally, social offerings and contributions were the characteristics of other distinguished volunteers. The local branches provided an account of the voluntary work of these women that focused in the provision of social care and philanthropy.

*“Ms. Pigi Tyrogala, former president of the YWCA, offered social and financial support to those in need for many years. Her father, a reserve officer was rarely present, fighting during the Balkan Wars. Due to his absence Pigi became a very sensitive person, always offering help and support in every social occasion. She volunteered for the Zakynthos’ Association of Public Welfare. The event hall of the YWCA of Zakynthos was named in honour of the late Pigi Tyrogala.”*

### ***YWCA Zakynthos***

#### ***6.5.2. Volunteers of the contemporary Greek YWCA***

Interviewed participants raised some issues that indicated the reasons for joining YWCA local branches. They believed that the factors that most affected their long-term participation were companionship, friendship and personal development. Analysis of personal experiences and opinions underlined the psychological factors together with the importance of personal development that determined and maintained the initial interest of the volunteers to Greek branches of the YWCA.

On the basis of their own personal experience the participants anticipated that new members would be attracted by the same reasons for which current participants found interest in volunteering in the Greek YWCA. The findings revealed four major categories of reasons for which current volunteers joined and remained for a number of years in their local centres.

- i. The first reason highlighted the psychological support and the alternative benefits that women found in the organisation.

*“After the death of my husband, I registered in the psychology group, without knowing what the YWCA was actually doing...I was immediately attracted ...I found not only one but plenty of warm hugs; people that took me as I was and helped me to stand up on my feet again. And after some time I was asked to enter into the governing board of our centre...The benefits that I gained from the organisation were much more than those I have offered.”*

**G 15.**

*“...it alleviates the contemporary woman from the heavy load of loneliness. Women learn to think freely, love and offer.”* **IN 3.3.**

*“When I became a member of this local branch fifteen years ago, my life changed. I found companionship.”* **IN 4.3.**

- ii. The second reason highlighted the importance of experience that women receive at the YWCA. Either in terms of collaboration and discussion with other women of their local society or in terms of social education and multileveled knowledge, the participants acknowledged that within this association they developed themselves.



*“The organisation has helped women of our region to socialize and to find a warm place that provides friendship, joy and companionship.”* IN

**3.2.**

*“I took a lot of things from the YWCA. Help, support, things not offered easily today by anyone. Our team was based on communication, dialogue, companionship and personal contact. We were giving and we were taking so much more back.”* IN **8.1.**

*“Personally, I enjoy the friendship and communication as well as the training offered by my centre.”* IN **4.5.**

*“I am one of the oldest members of our local branch. I received training courses in English, sewing and cutting; courses that have helped me a lot. The excursions to the ancient sites of our region, gave me a further learning opportunity. Moreover, within this centre I felt the joy of friendship and group collaboration.”* IN **4. 9.**

- iii. The third reason referred to the unexplained aura that the Greek YWCA transpired to the members; unexplained because volunteers could not understand what the reason was why other people could not find within the Greek YWCA the same things that they found. Volunteers underlined the

importance of finding a way to communicate correctly the aims of their organisation as well as the benefits that new members could actually receive.

*“I am not a native inhabitant of this city. I came here as a public servant. I knew the Greek YWCA from my home town. And I was advised to visit the local centre of this city...I was a stranger in this town. I needed human communication after work. Where could I go and what could I do? I felt affection and encouragement in this centre. I would recommend young women to find out more about the YWCA by attending to its various programs and activities. And we should welcome them with warmth and be more convincing when trying to persuade them that they can actually avail something...Information that is missing. Two days ago we attended a training session from a psychologist, who before coming here thought that we were a totally religious organisation and not an organisation with cultured members.” G 3.*

*“...That is the YWCA for me: a mother. A mother that helps her young children to grow...Through my offer I wanted to show to my organisation that it was worth educating me, it was worth them investing in me...However, I wouldn't recommend other women to come. In the old days, women wouldn't talk; they would only do. Maybe we should follow their example and ...Become known to the other women through our activities, not what we said.” IN 13.1.*

*“...It is very difficult to determine what the reason was...I saw the building and I entered. An aura of respect was in the air...It was also the feeling that you got while talking with other members...Positive feeling... I felt welcomed and accepted. They did not care whether you were educated or not, rich or poor... Through the eyes of the YWCA, I saw the world beyond my own knowledge... and this unbiased education helped me in my own work later on.”* **IN 8.3.**

- iv. The fourth category identified the role of other people and relative experience to their enrolling to/engaging in the activities of the YWCA. This reason was especially clear in small communities where interpersonal bonds were strong enough to encourage new members to register freely. The local branches of the Greek YWCA were considered a safe environment since other women had already joined the branches' programs.

*“Both my sister and my mother were members, so I was the natural candidate. I liked the fact that I could learn new things...I became more sensitive about a lot of issues. I started wondering whether I could actually do something in order to change things around me...Our centre is a place where women communicate, offer and exchange ideas. Examples are the environmental programs for young children and the book review groups. Our members give and take at the same time.”* **G 18.**

*“I have known the YWCA since the days when my grandmother was a member. I knew for what the YWCA was standing for...I became a member when my children grew up and did not need me...In the first place, I didn't know what I was doing here. Gradually I was taught a lot of new things. I improved the traits/qualities of my character and I learned how to co-operate with other women. I learned to listen. I learned to distinguish some new things that as a housewife did not know anything about ...I am experienced now...Many times I felt joy and other times disappointment. But this is a kind of education...This is my advice to candidate new members; the social education that the YWCA offers.” G 9.*

*“In my eyes, the Greek YWCA is misunderstood. I was urged to join this organisation by a neighbour... I was hesitant. And one day I came. I couldn't believe my own eyes the range of activities and the family atmosphere that was evident throughout the building... And I said to myself: This is it. I was welcomed, I was encouraged, I was enthusiastic...The YWCA needs a new program...The problem is that women, in general, do not know a lot of things about us. They hear something about an organisation that they do not know, and then lack of information makes them question the activities of the organisation. They ask: What is your organisational goal? Why are you gathering there? I say the YWCA needs advertising. This is the way to attract. Once they are inside, they will stay, as I did.” IN 6.1.*

#### 6.6. The internal set of associational challenges

Visits to the local branches of the Greek YWCA aided to the inference of the challenges expressed in the yearly reports of the Greek YWCA. Discussions with local volunteers and readings of local reports provided the opportunity of pinpointing the real causes/purposes for which these local branches were created in the first place. The major observable remarks were the creation of local associations as an answer to the urgent needs of a region, the static housing/the permanent location of the branches-usually in buildings of a certain age with old-fashioned furniture and decoration- and the high influence of particular individuals that initiated the creation of the Greek YWCA local associations. The observations that concerned the reasons for the establishment of the various local centres led to the creation of two major categories.

The first category represented a group of centres established as a response to the urgent claims/requirements of a particular region. Moreover, this group entails good examples of the initial social orientation of the organisation that aimed mainly at helping women in need.

##### *YWCA Kerkyra (Corfu)*

*The Kerkyra YWCA was founded in 1954 responding to the flood of immigrants arriving from Epirus to Corfu Island, after the Civil War. The women of Kerkyra's YWCA organized groups in order to help women refugees develop skills which would help them improve their daily life. They*

*were taught reading and writing during afternoon classes, so that they could go to work, during day time. Kerkyra's YWCA continued providing help to women in their efforts to have a professional orientation. It established workshops of batik, enamelling, copper and hagiography. It also urged and helped women to develop personal interests, enjoy a social life, but most importantly to advance themselves, which is one of YWCA's principal goals worldwide. Since 1960, Kerkyra's YWCA has created and organized a child care centre which continues its work until today. Apart from daily care and creative activities, YWCA's children's centre continually evolves, ensuring children aged between 2.5 and 5.5 years old get experienced and specialized support.*

The second category entailed the local centres that were created as a response to the limited empowerment and social education of women. Members constituted local groups that offered a variety of programs for the social education of local inhabitants.

#### *YWCA Komotini*

*The YWCA of Komotini was founded in 1976, with the encouragement of the members of the YWCA in Thessaloniki. Through its innovative and advanced programs of activities, the YWCA of Komotini made a true difference, providing women with the opportunity to collectively participate in the public life of their town. Among others the initial activities of the Komotini YWCA were the preparation and submission of proposals for the amendment of relevant articles of the Greek Civil Code, according to article*

*4 of the Greek Constitution regarding gender equality and the social support of women.*

Attendance to the meetings of the local governing boards, collection/compilation? and definition of the observed problems, and the check on the frequency and distribution of events resulted to the incorporation of findings and their interpretation into the general evidence. The overall impression, when attending to the various assemblies of the local governing boards, was a feeling of anxiety and a high level of responsibility on behalf of the volunteers. Frequent issues, like the monthly payment of bills and the running of the centre's programs, were among the most frequent issues raised during the discussions of the board members. The two major issues that encompassed the majority of the findings were the development of their local centre and the missing support from the headquarters of the Greek YWCA.

*6.6.1. Development*

Volunteers stressed the importance of altering the current way of working, by emphasizing that the goals and priorities of the YWCA were those that attracted them to the organisation, whereas the working mode and the limited resources are those that members considered obstacles to the overall operation of their centre. The findings of this research revealed that members felt that the programs and services provided by their centres were socially superior to the corresponding programs and services offered by other agencies in their community. However, they acknowledged that their

programs were not as popular and successful as those offered by other agencies although they did not know what the reason for that was.

*“Municipality programs do not train volunteers. They get money and they offer it. Whenever they requested for volunteers, no one went. This does not apply to the YWCA that knows how to train volunteers. And the YWCA volunteers are true volunteers; they know how to behave. Just watch the ladies that come in only for a lecture. At the end of the session they all put a hand in order to clean up the room and put everything in the correct way. This is the YWCA; everyone does something. We don't know what we are doing wrong and we cannot attract young women. Maybe it is our current way of working that does not favour rejuvenation. The aged members of the boards that don't give space to young women...The financial instability and the heavy load...It is all this together that makes the organisation uninviting”*  
**G 9.**

*“We had the idea of a program for the care of old people in our town. The municipality was running something similar but as soon as their funding stopped, they did not continue to offer it; not even with a small fee. Here we operate and think differently. We do our best to continue the implementation of popular and useful programs even if our budget is limited. We think that the need of women is superior to our financial planning. Maybe this is the reason that we failed, since the quality of the programs was shrinking gradually and they were not any more attractive.”* **G 7.**

**PO 11. Being invited to attend a YWCA priority program**



*V 1: I have told you. Come and see with your own eyes, not with theories from the desk. From experience...*

*R: Is this program run by volunteers only?*

*V 1: Absolutely. Every week, same time, same place. They trust the YWCA. This is the best program offered for...The neighbourhood trust us...We come here with joy and happiness. And leave with the anxiety of how we are going to organize the next session.*

*R: Anxiety due to what?*

*V 2: We believe in this program but it is run only by the three of us for some time now. There is no interest from other volunteers.*

*V 1: We are getting tired and we are afraid that if we don't find our replacements soon, the program will stay on paper only and will not be applied...*

*“The quality of our programs was always important; important because these programs corresponded to the priorities of the organisation. This quality vanished and along came the decline of the voluntary force. Women were not interested any more. Not because the YWCA was an infamous organisation, but because its work was poor and not attractive to young women.” G 5.*

*“It is not only that young women do not have time to come to the organisation. It is what they see once they come in; an aged governing board*

*that waits the new 'victims' that will take over their tasks. I think that we should not blame only the young girls and start looking inside. The YWCA is a voluntary association and has something to say and offer...At least it has offered to me a lot; this is my opinion" IN 6.1.*

***PO 1.: Conversation with a volunteer at a coffee shop***

*V: We once attempted to cooperate with the municipality and thank God we did not.*

*R: Why is that so?*

*V: Corruption...We are not like that. We may not have money but we have dignity.*

*However, with dignity you cannot finance programs...*

*R: Other possible routes?*

*V: No. The purpose of the YWCA is distinct. We couldn't find other organisations that resembled us. What I am thinking at the moment is to cultivate our relationship with other local centres. Exchange experiences...I heard two other centres that have done it and it was very successful.*

*R: Successful in what terms?*

*V: No, no for the outside world, no. Just for us.*

Moreover, although volunteers questioned the operations and the means employed by the current Greek YWCA, they did not wish to alter their beliefs and the mission of the organisation.

*“We don’t wish to change. The YWCA is the only organisation that welcomes all women irrespective of their abilities, education and personality...I think that it is wrong to adhere to past practices...If we want new blood in this centre we have to change our way of working...The priorities of the YWCA are noble. It is us that do not know how to apply them.” G 15.*

*“In the past Mrs Athanassiou-a former YWCA president- had two wonderful ideas. First was to train the volunteers, and second to decentralize the YWCA. This was ok for those days. We need to find something new and revolutionary to achieve now what she had achieved then.” G 16.*

Instead they supported changes in the current working conditions and operations; changes that would enhance the association’s capabilities to meet the greatest challenge of all, the attraction and retention of a young voluntary workforce. This change referred mainly to meeting the World Movement's priorities to which the Greek YWCA belonged. The focus on women’s problems and the formulation of innovative programs according to the contemporary requirements of society was underlined by the volunteers.

*“We forgot that we are a woman’s organisation. We felt that by offering four to five programs that met the priorities of the YWCA, everything would be ok...And then we wondered what went wrong...I believe that the problem concentrates on the following issue: we really don’t know our target group. We are a woman’s organisation that seeks to develop women. Maybe if we recall who we are, maybe we will find out what is wrong with our current organisation.”* **IN 6.2.**

*“I believe that as far as social issues are concerned the Greek YWCA ought to design programs towards this direction. We have done it here in the past and it was successful...Women need what we are offering, but maybe we don’t know how to offer it anymore. We have the right to change some things and to adjust them to the circumstances and to the needs of society.”* **IN 8.2.**

*“We are resistant to change, because we are afraid that by changing we may change also the mission of our organisation. This is not our purpose...I think we are resistant to anything new. I recall a period that we thought that it was about time to start focusing on priority programs and leave everything else aside. And then we started quarrelling, on a friendly basis of course, with each other...You see the other programs brought money in. But I wonder whether this practice has altered the character of our organisation...”* **G 18.**

In addition, the matter of limited resources for the renting of new spaces or renovating houses and apartments that belonged to the local branches was highlighted as an important challenge. Volunteers expressed their concern that the unwelcoming and old-fashioned lodges were acting as constraints for the attraction of new volunteers and inhibited the improvement of the branches' current ways of working.

***PO 14.: While preparing the room for a program***

*R: Any particular difficulties that you are facing?*

*V: Many. First of all this centre is granted to us by the local municipality. But we are not the only ones using it. There are other voluntary and cultural associations operating here. Imagine how difficult it is to balance the programs of all these associations within one centre. It is impossible to implement the programs they want us to do.*

*R: So a possible proposal?*

*V: We need organisation. We want our own space. We want young women. How on earth will they be interested to attend to programs in here? The YWCA has so many things to give and we are unable to offer them.*

A high level of anxiety was also associated with the financial management of the local centres. Members of the board seemed to be unable to respond to complicated administrative issues and consulted each other as

to whether a member of their families or inner circle of friends could help them to solve certain problems.

**PO 15.:** The members of this board dealt with the financial issues of the preceding month, and avoided calculating the expenses of the month ahead due to tiredness and lack of interest. Instead they proposed to a member of the board to ask the help of her family that had experience in accounting to perform the task for them.

Finally, boards seek to receive help from headquarters when facing severe financial problems that could put in jeopardy their future existence within their local societies.

**PO 2. :** The governing board members of this centre demonstrated a high level of anxiety due to the financial problems they were facing. The conscientious questioning of what went wrong and how they were about to correct it brought about the discussion for the search of outside help for organizing their finances and the settlement of their bills.

*“If we don’t find money by December, we are lost...we didn’t expect any help from anyone else other than headquarters...We are ready to abandon, if we are not given financial support”.*

#### 6.6.2. Support of the volunteers

The anticipated contribution of the Greek YWCA's president and the national presiding board focused on four major components: the conscientious and accountable running of the organisation, frequent communication with the basis, the designation of training and supportive facilities and the empowerment of the local centre's volunteers.

*"I will speak without constraint...The Head of the Greek YWCA is the only one that can and should support the local centres through the designation of new and innovative programs. The local centres do not have the capability to support themselves. We need guidance. We need professional staff...They can't expect us to apply a priority program by sending us a typed guide in two pages...The Greek YWCA ought to see things in a different way. They expect things from us, and they give us nothing." G 16.*

By acknowledging the importance of work undertaken by the governing board, local centres looked for assistance coming from above whenever they faced problems. As stated by a number of older members, facilitation and solidarity were offered unconditionally in the past by the elected governing board.

*"...The Greek YWCA has supported us in the past with the organisation of national programs like the Joy of Reading, Greek language and Civilization...and other things that the local centres offered to their members.*

*Nevertheless the recent financial and property programs of the organisation imposed the discontinuation of this supportive communication... We are fully aware that if we want our centres to continue their operation, we ought to find solutions to attract new members. However, we need the full support of headquarters. We can't do things on our own."* **G 17.**

*"I have only one thing to observe. In the past communication between our centre and the national board and professional staff was more frequent. We were empowered by the visits of the national boards' members... This helped us a lot... The annual national councils are of course a kind of communication, but it is something different, more impersonal. Attendance is useful for those attending, but for the rest of the group? How successfully can a new volunteer transfer to our centre the benefits/results of her personal training?"* **G 5.**

*"In the beginning-long ago- the board was present every now and then in our centre's exhibitions, festivals etc. Volunteer training sessions were more frequent and interesting; today nothing but correspondence full of formalities and a yearly national meeting, when the local centres' boards are accused of bad administrative and financial organisation."* **IN 12.4.**

Nevertheless, financial and time constraints of the last two decades have imposed serious communicational barriers. The national presiding board confronted a major financial challenge that jeopardized the securing of the



organisation's resources. This activity transformed the board from a purely top-down planning committee to a managerial board that resembled an entrepreneurial management board. Being neglected was the predominant feeling of members at the local branches. Communicational problems and criticisms about the people leading the organisation were two of the factors that described the disappointment for the absent support of the national association.

Most of the participants agreed that the support of the volunteers from the Greek YWCA's headquarters was an important determinant of their centres' operation. The lack of maintaining good relationships with local centres was criticized as a barrier to the overall development of the organisation.

*"...I don't wish to be misunderstood but our centre is not among the beloved ones of the National Board. There is no such thing like support and communication with us. We wished to receive more frequent visits from headquarters. Physically, not through letters...They said we did not do things in the correct way. We need training. Do you know whether long distance training can actually offer something to our members? And if we are doing something wrong, we are here ready to hear."* **IN 1.5.**

*"...Our current communication? Requests of the type: Please pay your annual subscription to the Greek YWCA. Please find young women to*

*staff your local centres. In the past, communication was more frequent and fruitful.” G 7.*

*“With the ‘mother company’ we don’t have a good relationship and communication. They named us travel agencies, because we organized educational trips and visits for our members. They accuse us constantly for not doing this and for doing the other...What is bothering me, is that they themselves are disorganized so what exactly do they expect from the local centres?...I am sure that most of the YWCA local volunteers do not have an idea of who governs this national association and for what purpose...And because, my friend here mentioned the exclusive role of the annual national meetings, my opinion is that the effect of these meetings is meaningless if they are not followed by visits and regular communication and support.” G 14.*

The participants emphasized the different kind of communication that existed in the past and favoured lifting of communicational barriers that influence both sides of the same coin, the local branches and the headquarters, to be suspicious and derisive of each other.

*“I am tired. I occupy myself with the daily responsibilities and I go back home full of anxiety. There is no organisation. We seek to implement programs according to the priorities of the association and then we need some help. They said that the empowerment of women is a priority for the World YWCA. Who is going to empower us? They (the national governance*

*board) think that we are their local staff; wrong, we are volunteers. We seek to gain something out of this too.” G 15.*

*“...In the past the relationship between the local centres and the National Organisation was more indispensable and productive. We received training within our settings and not only at the national council. Today there is retro flexion in everything. The head of the Greek YWCA is not innovative and attractive any more. And this is the reason why local centres are fading. The problem comes from the top.” IN 19.1.*

#### 6.7. Conclusion

As a women’s organisation the Greek YWCA is an acknowledged member of the Greek Women’s Movement. The history of the organisation revealed that whenever needed the Greek YWCA participated actively towards the achievement of a common goal; for example towards the granting of women’s right to vote. The past alignment of the organisations’ priorities to the ones set forth by the Greek Women’s Movement testified the active operation of the local centres. Moreover, the profiles of distinguished volunteers demonstrated that former volunteers of local associations contributed actively to the social and political scenes in their communities, indicating in that sense that volunteerism was, apart from a noble action, an action that involved social networking and awareness of social and political problems. This indication underlined that, former active membership found in programs and services of the past, offered tangible solutions that matched

with their overall orientation towards the pursuit of answers to the social problems of each period.

The declining number of registered volunteers and especially those that would actively participate in the organisation of the local branches, was linked according to the findings of the current orientation of the organisation to the fact that it was blurred, and without concrete aim and scope towards the provision of answers to women's contemporary challenges. Therefore, the contemporary association does not attract potential active members that could aid the development of the organisations' programs. In addition, the programs of the local associations reveal that there was a shift from purely social programs that aimed at the development and support of women, to cultural and educational development of local branches' participants and members. This changing orientation and the stable provision of the same cultural and educational programs, as highlighted in the program lists of the centres, implied that the same group of people that initiated this shift also planned and implemented this continuous transit in order to serve the needs of specific members; ignoring in that sense the interests and problems of potential new volunteers.

In addition, the findings of this research revealed that the members of the local associations recognized the distinctiveness of the way in which the organisation was operating and suggested that members felt that the programs and services of their centres were socially superior to the corresponding programs and services offered by other agencies in their community. In addition, the members recognized too their inability to attract and retain new and young volunteers because of the adoption of old-fashioned ways of working. The old buildings and apartments that hosted local branches

activities, created also a sense of frustration as their maintenance required a lot of work and care. Nevertheless, they opposed to any kind of change concerning their mission and essence of existence; they favoured development and opposed transformation. Finally, according to the volunteer responses, there was a deep feeling of negligence on behalf of the headquarters due to both practical and personal reasons. The anticipated contribution of the president and the presiding board focused on four major components: conscientious and accountable running of the organisation, frequent communication with the basis, designation of training and supportive facilities and the empowerment of the local centre's volunteers. As stated by a number of older members, facilitation and solidarity were unconditionally offered by the elected national presiding board. Nevertheless, the financial and time constraints of the last two decades have imposed serious communication barriers. The national presiding board confronted a major financial challenge that jeopardized the securing of the organisation's resources. This activity transformed the board from a purely top-down planning committee to a managerial board that resembled an entrepreneurial management board.

The third part of this thesis that is included in chapters seven and eight discusses the major findings as well as the conclusions, contributions and limitations of this research. The results are linked to the existing literature on organisational learning and social movements, and then used in order to provide insight and understanding of what kind of change is happening in the contemporary Greek YWCA.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

### 7.1. Introduction

As stated in the introductory chapter the definition of change proposed in this thesis combines the thematic material drawn from organisational learning and social movement's theories. This study reviewed, in chapters two and three, the major theoretical foundations of the aforementioned theories, and seeks in this chapter to reach a new definition of change with particular reference to the findings concerning the Greek YWCA that were presented in chapters five and six.

The collective identities or framing theory is used as the theoretical framework that presents and explains the model that reflects the actual changes that are taking place within the Greek YWCA. This theory explains the social movements' emergence according to the common culture that the movements' members share. Culture refers to the collection of beliefs, values and ideologies of individuals found within a social movement; this collection illustrates the significance of a specific problem and highlights ways in which this problem can be overcome.

In the literature review it was argued that framing process contains 3 major stages (Melucci, 1989; Poletta and Jasper, 2001; Benford and Snow, 2000; Ryan and Gamson, 2006): the formulation of an identity, the activation of individuals and the choice of a common strategy. Accordingly the analysis and discussion of this research's findings is done by presenting a three stage model that:

- a. describes the cultural identity of the contemporary Greek YWCA  
voluntary workforce

- b. illustrates the volunteers' perceptions of the significance of the organisational change issues and problems deriving from the headquarters' policies of the Greek YWCA and the World YWCA
- c. highlights the ways in which volunteers perceive the overcoming of the organisational change process.

The purpose of this coupling is to enhance our understanding about organisational change in the voluntary sector and to discuss the results in the light of a new definition of change.

Section 7.2. provides a presentation of the cultural identity of the Greek YWCA current workforce by synthesizing the volunteers' personal beliefs, ideas and experiences. Section 7.3. analyses the volunteers' views on the organisational changes deriving from the new requirements of the World YWCA global movement and from the current challenges of the contemporary Greek YWCA as it faces the problems of recruitment and retention of a new voluntary workforce. Section 7.4. discusses the ways in which volunteers perceive and illustrate the overcoming of the organisational change challenges by emphasizing the role of their cultural identity when meeting the international and national driven need for change. In section 7.5. a new and alternative definition of organisational change is introduced by arguing that change within the Greek YWCA is the outcome of three processes: the unification of the volunteers' common experiences, the linkage of the new organisational requirements, and the generation of new ideas. The summary of the major findings of this discussion is provided in section 7.6.

## 7.2. Framing the cultural identity of the contemporary Greek YWCA voluntary workforce

Social movements' theory can enhance our understanding of the particular challenges faced by voluntary organisations. Theories on social movements and theories on the voluntary sector treat the parallel issues of mobilizing and organizing collective actions towards a common social or political goal (Glasius, 2004). Issues of social movements' emergence and the consequent involvement of individuals have been set out in the literature review with the aim of assessing the importance of social movements within the Greek YWCA. The major themes highlighted in the literature were that movement development was explained according to theories that stressed the importance of resources and opportunities acquisition, in order to serve the demands of collective identities. In addition, it was argued that the development of voluntary organisations can be explained according to the theoretical insight from social movement theory with regards to the framing processes, the organisational processes and the mobilization processes. Concerning the framing development, Benford and Snow (2000:623-627) conceptualized three processes according to which frames are generated and developed. One of them is the discursive process that involves firstly the unification of members' common experiences and shared events and secondly the most striking experiences and events as symbols of the members' movement. In this regard, this chapter presents and unifies the shared experiences of the Greek YWCA volunteers that develop in turn their cultural identity.

The findings regarding the determinants for participating to the activities of the Greek YWCA are consistent with the collective identity theory which explains the emergence of social movements. In addition, the emotional component of the collective identity is in line with social movements' theory that underlines the impact



of emotions important in the orientation of volunteers (Goodwin et al, 2004; 416-423). Especially the affective bonds provide the individuals' basic orientation in the world and produce likewise positive feelings for people that share the same emotions and negative for those opposing to their emotions. In addition, the findings revealed four major categories of reasons for which current volunteers joined and remained for a number of years in their local centre. The first reason highlighted the psychological support and the alternative way that women found in the organisation. The second reason highlighted the importance of experience that women receive at YWCA. The third reason referred to the unexplained "aura" that Greek YWCA transpired to the members; unexplained because volunteers could not understand what the reason was, why other people could not find within the Greek YWCA the same things they had found. The fourth category identified the role of relatives and other people in promoting their enrolment to the activities of YWCA. On the basis of their own personal experience the participants anticipated that new members would be attracted by the same reasons for which current participants found interest in volunteering in Greek YWCA. Existing members of Greek YWCA anticipated attracting new volunteers by expressing their own experiences and by creating a sense of an organisational identity and culture. The results of the interviews emphasized that the reasons for which volunteers joined the organisation gave them the chance to fulfil their emotional needs; something that other organisations did not offer to them. The above were effectively highlighted in the following quotations taken from two different individual interviews:

*"...It is very difficult to determine what the reason was...I saw the building and I entered. The aura of respect was in the air...It was also the feeling that you got while talking with other members...Positive feeling... I felt welcomed and accepted.*

*They did not care whether you were educated or not, rich or poor... Through the eyes of the YWCA, I saw the world beyond my own knowledge... and this unbiased education helped me in my own work later on.”* IN 8.3.

*“I took a lot of things from the YWCA. Help, support, things not easily offered today by anyone. Our team was based on communication, dialogue, companionship and personal contact. We were giving and we were taking so much more back.”* IN 8.1.

In addition, by referring to the examples of distinguished volunteers of the past, the current volunteers sketched the character of a potential current distinguished volunteer and consequently added to the building of their collective identity by reflecting also in the past of their organisation. The acquired profiles revealed that former distinguished volunteers shared the beliefs of offering and working towards the advancement of their communities through the reinforcement of the Greek YWCA's local centres. Firstly, volunteers of some centres referred to figures that participated actively in the operations of their local centres while being at the same time mothers and spouses. The combination of family and voluntary work was characterized as a difficult task that required a lot of personal effort and love for volunteerism. Secondly, other local centres presented the figures of women that have given not only their precious time and personal work, but also donated houses that have ensured the existence of the local centres in which they participated for years. Thirdly, volunteers highlighted the overall contribution of women who helped in founding and operating their local centre. They underlined the specific role that these women played in the political and professional world, pointing out in that way that these volunteers were active members of the society who at the same time believed in and encouraged the work of the Greek YWCA. Finally, social offerings and

contributions were the characteristics of other distinguished volunteers. The local branches provided an account of the voluntary work of these women that focused in the provision of social care and philanthropy.

Moreover, the perception of the volunteers about the way in which the Greek YWCA was cultivating today this common identity that corresponded to the emotional needs of the volunteers indicated that social movements' theories and their implications force organisations to eventually change and to become more concerned about the individual needs of their existing members. Social education and a clear comprehension of the world around them, constituted two of the major characteristics that gradually shaped the common identity of Greek YWCA volunteers.

*"I became more sensitive about a lot of issues. I started wondering whether I could actually do something in order to change things around me...Our centre is a place where women communicate, offer and exchange ideas. Examples are the environmental programs for young children and the book review groups. Our members give and take at the same time."* G 18.

Furthermore, the social priorities of the World YWCA movement that are implemented through the designation of programs offered by Greek YWCA local centres depict the specific needs of its members that seek to promote social, economic, cultural, religious and political justice, and consequently express the values and ideologies of individuals that are framed within the World YWCA movement. The priorities focus on four major strategies and shape the agenda of the world movement accordingly. The strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS aims at the creation of "safe spaces" for women, where they will be able to discuss and disclose the challenges they are facing. The strategy on the

elimination of all kinds of violence against women intends to end the stigmatization and discrimination of women and to integrate informative programs for men in the governmental agenda. The strategy on peace with justice is referring to these parts of the world that developed countries have forgotten. Finally, the strategy on sustainable development is in accordance with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). Access to education and to a clean environment is the core of YWCA's framework of goals. The offered programs of the local branches that focused on the aforementioned strategies, cultivated further the collective identity of Greek YWCA members in their local communities. In addition, the alignment of the local strategies to the global strategies of the World YWCA movement stressed the importance of the transnational activities on the one hand and the impact of the new features of those strategies on the identity of the local volunteers.

Finally, the analysis of volunteer perceptions about volunteering within the Greek YWCA demonstrated also a degree of confusion between the situational factors that affected member participation in the first place and the current orientation of the members that criticized the organisation for losing its social identity. Volunteers demonstrated some dissatisfaction by expressing their concern about the lost social identity of the organisation, and eulogized the reasons for which they came to the YWCA in the first place, by adding in that way their will to move on and change. Data analysis yielded two major practices that underlined the importance of offering: first, establishing tangible responses to women in need, and secondly, transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and supportive association. Volunteers highlighted the need of rediscovering what the YWCA stood for. They questioned the way current practices actually impacted on their local societies. In the past support for vulnerable women was designed and offered through programs and services.

Nowadays, limited resources and support from the national YWCA has stopped further development of these programs, projecting the social aspect of the organisation to society. Volunteers suggested a new orientation of the organisation that would highlight the transformation from an educational and advisory role to a more supportive one, by underlining the superiority of the Greek YWCA's historical mission and, therefore, the desire to protect that mission. The volunteers of the Greek YWCA highlighted their own perceptions on the international driven need for change at their local centres by testifying what actually happened in their local centres and what organisational change meant to them.

The next subchapter analyses the volunteers' views on the organisational changes deriving from the new requirements of the World YWCA global movement and from the current challenges of the contemporary Greek YWCA as it faces the problems of recruitment and retention of a new voluntary workforce.

### 7.3. Highlighting the volunteers' views on the organisational change problem

In addition to the aforementioned stereotypes set forth by the voluntary workforce, the limited range of offered programs and the repetition of certain activities testified that the membership characteristics remained the same during the past years. Involving volunteers is a challenge that also demands clear strategic design. The principal challenges underlying the overall challenge of involving volunteers are recruitment, retention, involvement and the support and supervision processes. However, recruitment is a very difficult task that may leave the associations surprised when finding out that their expectations about the motives of new volunteers are not accurate (Clary and Ridge, 1992:344). Furthermore,

involvement of volunteers also entails the challenge to distinguish the uniqueness of volunteering, especially in membership associations where time and work is offered in return of direct benefits for the members (Harris, 1997:5). Volunteers do expect to receive the appropriate training and support that will enable them to operate effectively and efficiently (Ryall, 2006). Therefore, the resistance of the local branches' volunteers embedded the search for a new voluntary force that could take over and promote new programs and ideas within the Greek YWCA.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed feelings of anxiety and high levels of responsibility on behalf of the members of the governing boards. Frequent issues, like the monthly payment of bills and the running of the centre's programs, were among the most frequent issues mentioned during discussions of the board members. Members of the board seemed to be unable to respond to complicated administrative issues. Moreover, members rarely referred to the crucial need of implementing programs based on the priorities of the organisation and consumed themselves with the organizing of either extracurricular activities like excursions and "tea" meetings or educational programs like the art of jewel making or painting. This resulted to the employment of professional staff that was considered to be a characteristic of the wealthier local centres. For example, centres that offered a variety of services and programs and had therefore high revenues, employed staff that took care of most of the administrative work and seriously supported the work of the governing boards. In addition, members of the local governing boards revealed a sense of reluctance whenever new programs or ideas were brought forward. This reaction was considered as the natural outcome of the current way of operating since the governing boards could not cope with the existing amount of work and would not engage themselves in the planning and implementation of new programs. Instead they

supported changes in the current working conditions and operations. Most of the participants agreed that the support of the volunteers from the Greek YWCA headquarters was an important determinant of their centres' operation. The lack of maintaining good relationships with local centres was criticized as a barrier to the overall development of the organisation. The promotion of leadership that ought to favour unification, tolerance and democratic governance, was not the primary goal of the organisation that strived to ensure its financial independence and existence through the adoption of strict managerial operations. Therefore, the routine operation of the local governing boards alongside with the avoidance of undertaking further responsibilities characterized the resistance of the local associations to change.

*“Everything must be done collectively. However, the leader matters too. Now you will ask me in what way, I would say not only education is important. The leader must be aware for what the YWCA stands for. But this is not enough either; she needs something more...the aura...I don't know how to express myself better...In any case a person that could unify the organisation again.”* IN 10.5.

Finally, the analysis of the findings entailed also lack of engaging to transparent and strategic operational practices and of fostering the representation of the organisation through partnerships and co-operations. The findings of the research revealed that partnerships or relations with the outside world were considered, according to participant responses, as an important organisational challenge. Partnership with local government was reported to and authorized by headquarters; the members of the latter gave the impression that partnerships were not favoured by the organisation. In addition, volunteers felt that the power of their local associations

was reduced as they entered into the franchise age of the voluntary sector and therefore they were suspicious of any kind of new cooperation. Furthermore, the notion of accountability was something that volunteers, involved in the compilation of the annual review of their activities and operations, felt was lacking. Accountability was, therefore, perceived as an inter-organisational issue that stressed the importance of transparency only between the members of the Greek YWCA and that failed to recognize the importance of external forces that could impose change; like the implementation of the World YWCA constitutional requirement to adjust to specific standards of good management.

The following two subchapters illustrate the volunteers' perceptions of the significance of the organisational change issues and problems deriving from the headquarters' policies of the Greek YWCA and the World YWCA.

### *7.3.1. The requirements of the World YWCA global movement*

Korten (1980:500) introduces three stages of organisational learning. The first two stages are defined as “learning to be effective” and “learning to be efficient”. The third stage refers to “learning to expand” through the consideration of applying certain tasks that are tested for their efficiency to a greater scale of activities. Studies, in the reactions of voluntary organisations to the use of advanced information and communication technologies, conclude that organisations, that consider the technological opportunities, react positively to their adoption and use (Bishop, 2010:991-1013; Burt and Taylor, 2003:115-127). Moreover, the commitment to action that describes the continuous organisational adaptability and the building of



partnerships and connections is an essential practice for the learning transformation of organisations (Gill, 2010:765).

On the issue of partnerships and connections, there are three factors that demonstrate the need for co-operation both within and outside the sector. The first factor is the need to demonstrate the public value of an organisation's mission and attract new sponsors; this demonstration is more convincing when accompanied by the combined effort of associations present in a community because it strengthens the notion of sponsors that a program will be more effective and will actually meet the needs of community members. The second factor is the need to be legitimate; legitimacy is the maintenance of trusting relationships with an organisation's environment in order to achieve the recognition of the organisations' operation and work. The third factor is the need to strengthen operational capabilities; this strengthening is important for the persuasion of sponsors that non-profits do actually direct funding to the delivery of services, and this is best achieved through shared programming and exchange of experience with other organisations. Finally, co-operation also includes the notions of power and empowerment. The collective dimension of empowerment is that "where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have done alone" (Rowlands, 1995:103).

The pioneering character of the Greek YWCA in designating and offering social programs for the development of women, since its establishment, has raised Greek YWCA to the status of a prestigious voluntary organisation. The review of the Greek YWCA history was full of examples that demonstrated professional incentives for the well-being of women in the Greek society. The Greek YWCA was among the six Women's Organisations who set up ad hoc action coordination that sought the right of women to vote at the National Elections. Moreover, the organisation gave

possibilities and opportunities for experimental work. The School for Social Work and the School for Librarians were created in order to provide women with the necessary skills for the job market (Cominos, 1952:405; Krikelas, 1982:231). The copying of these initiatives by governmental, municipal and other voluntary agencies has created a sense of mistrust to the creation of partnerships. According to the findings, this mistrust was interpreted as an unwritten inter-organisational rule that dictated avoidance of co-operations and partnerships with other agencies.

*“I remember long ago, headquarters did not allow any cooperation with anyone. I went once to the university at a meeting of Greek Voluntary Organisations with my mother in law. And I had an idea to open a channel for cooperation with the municipality and other agencies in the region...Oh what happened when they found out! They (the national governing board) came here quickly to berate us.” G 16.*

However, the review of the World YWCA documents revealed that partnerships were as important as all other organisational challenges for the development and future existence of voluntary organisations. Belonging and empowering are best met when working with other organisations while seeking to minimize the underlining risks that such a partnership may have. However, the volunteers of the local branches felt that their legitimacy and capability could be strengthened by compliance to working together with other agencies towards the achievement of a common goal. In the past, the organisation undertook actions and programs in cooperation with governmental agencies that aimed at the protection of vulnerable populations and the further education of women. Today, co-operations gradually diminish due to the limited knowledge for implementing new programs for the dissemination of YWCA's priorities.

*“I believe that the members of the Greek YWCA don’t keep the same pace with the priorities of the World YWCA. The women that are sent to the World Councils, come back full of new ideas. But not all these ideas can be applied in local centres, due to the limited capabilities of the members or due to the high level of knowledge required for the implementation of those programs. I don’t know how easy it would be to start a conversation about AIDS in our city. Although it is a priority of the World YWCA, I don’t know whether women in our centre could apprehend that. It would be nice for example to raise awareness in our community on the AIDS issue and maybe in partnership with the municipality or other agencies, but I am not sure whether we are eligible to start something like that.”* IN 2.3.

On the issue of organisational adaptability and in addition to the positive impact of building partnerships, the notion of accountability is a second milestone in achieving a legitimate expansion of the Greek YWCA. Accountability was something that volunteers associated with the annual review of their actions and operations. The National Council gave an account of how the organisations property was managed and the local centres presented how they fulfilled the priorities of Greek YWCA through the programs offered. Accountability was, therefore, perceived as an inter-organisational issue that stressed the importance of transparency only between the members of the Greek YWCA. The aforementioned findings were in line with the following theoretical definitions:

- i. To be accountable, means to account for that for which one is responsible for and to those to whom one is responsible to (Wadsworth, 1991:63). These definitions highlight the two important aspects of accountability that can be either a relationship between groups and individuals or a pattern of good behaviour. In

the case of Greek YWCA, members are accountable to each other for fulfilling the mission of the organisation according to its priorities. This two way relationship referred to the transparent operations of the Greek YWCA presiding board and to the professional governance of the local branches boards.

- ii. There are two kinds of information included in the definition of accountability (Cutt and Murray, 2000:11). Procedural accountability that refers to the observance of a set of rules and related laws as well as to the preparation of a financial statement or result; and consequential accountability that refers to the monetary efficiency and the effectiveness of the organisation; the consequential accountability of the national board of the Greek YWCA that was expected to give a clear and transparent account of its financial and administrative practice and the procedural accountability of the local centres to the national board.
- iii. Furthermore, there are three forms of accountability; explanatory accountability that refers to the right to be provided with an explanatory and descriptive account, accountability with sanctions that is the provision of an explanatory account upon which sanctions can be imposed and, finally, responsive accountability that is only the response to the demands of those to whom the members of an organisation are accountable to (Leat, 1988:67-68). All three forms of accountability that were reported in the findings

underlined the role and the need for accountability in the Greek YWCA.

The review of the literature also entailed other compelling arguments for the need of an accountable voluntary association (Kumar, 2003), such as attraction of sponsors and new members. In that sense, accountability was identified as a prerequisite for the compliance of Greek YWCA to certain standards. The new requirement for standards of good management and accountability within World YWCA along with compliance to the principles of the Chart of Social Responsibility of Civil Society Organisations in Greece, could transform Greek YWCA to an important and valued organisation that participated to the combined effort of establishing an accountable Greek third sector and legitimized its affiliation to an accountable international organisation. In addition, these requirements entailed serious considerations for the existence of the organisation in the long run. Accountable associations were characterized as healthy associations that could easily ensure their operation within their local communities.

*“...Therefore it is recommended that:*

*The World YWCA and member associations regularly review performance against the Standards of Good Management and Accountability (SGMA) to ensure healthy associations and to identify to the World YWCA areas of potential concern and need.”*

2007, World Council, Nairobi, Kenya

Recommendation adopted at the Legislative Meeting

Finally, it is important to mention that induced by the researcher's question on the issue of accountability and its relation to funding and the operational environment of the World YWCA, the Greek YWCA volunteers linked their operation's accountability to the possible benefits that they could have from external sources and funding. This finding is in line with Perkins et al (2007:322) suggestion that organisational staff and volunteers ought to reflect on how to integrate the participant stakeholders that maintain an interdependent relationship with the organisation.

*"Please tell us again why you referred to that?...Yes the accountability report. To obtain funding?...I think we have tried that in the past, but they needed more information. You know a more professional report."* G 3.

*"We have never included proposals in our reports. At least our current governing board never did. We keep to the formalities about our costs and revenues, descriptions of the programs."* IN 10.1.

The analysis of the aforementioned findings stressed the importance and the significance of partnership and accountability in the development and expansion of the Greek YWCA according to the perceptions of the organisations' volunteers. Among the compelling arguments that referred to the compliance of the association with accountability and co-operation demands, the volunteers addressed these issues not from a negative and critical point of view; instead they evaluated their substantial role in the development of their actions and recognized these demands as essential ingredients in the process of change.

### *7.3.2. The organisational challenge of resistance of the Greek YWCA volunteers*

The need to change has had an influence also on the volunteer's views on the feasibility of the local process of change. In particular, the commitment to purpose that entails the responsiveness to the members' needs and encourages the alignment of services with the organisations' mission (Gill, 2010:763) stresses that organisational mission can be influential when confronted with the dilemma of applying new organisational technologies (Mc Donald, 2007:256). The commitment to a clear and comprehensive mission facilitates the selection of the most appropriate innovations.

This review of the Greek YWCA's history emphasized the strict and concrete tradition that existed within Greek YWCA since its founding. The observations that concerned the reasons for the establishment of the various local centres led to the creation of two major categories. The first category represented a group of centres established as a response to the urgent requirements of a particular region. Moreover, this group entailed good examples of the initial social orientation of the organisation that aimed mainly at helping women in need. The second category entailed the local centres that were created as a response to the limited empowerment and social education of women. Members constituted local groups that offered a variety of programs for the social education of local inhabitants. The need for the protection of the organisational mission and the focus on inter-organisational communication among local branches and through the participation to the national councils became eventually the obstacles that caused the isolation of the Greek YWCA from local communities. The findings of this research revealed that the members of the local associations recognized the distinctiveness in the way the organisation was operating and suggested that members felt that the programs and services provided by their

centres were socially superior to the corresponding programs and services offered by other women's associations in their community.

*“The quality of our programs was always important; important because these programs corresponded to the priorities of the organisation. This quality vanished and along came the decline of the voluntary force. Women were not interested any more. Not because the YWCA was an infamous organisation, but because its work was poor and not attractive to young women.” G 5.*

However, the members recognized also their inability to attract and retain new and young volunteers because of the adoption of old-fashioned ways of working. This recognition produced valuable grounds for “feedback learning” (Huysman, 2009:57-58) of the Greek YWCA, which corresponded to learning being an outcome of effective adaption to the external environment. Organisational learning was appreciated as an important tool for the designation and implementation of local branches priority programs. The volunteers acknowledged that it was not only the mission of the organisation that could attract new volunteers but at the same time the way in which this mission could be accomplished. Nevertheless, they opposed any kind of change concerning their mission and fundamental purpose of their existence.

*“We had the idea of a program for the care of old people in our town. The municipality was running something similar but as soon as their funding stopped, they did not continue to offer it; not even with a small fee. Here we operate and think differently. We do our best to continue the implementation of popular and useful programs even if our budget is limited. We think that the need of women is superior to*



*our financial resources. Maybe this is the reason that we failed, since the quality of the programs was shrinking gradually and they were not any more attractive.” G 7.*

The reviewed example of a successful organisational transformation in chapter two, the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) in the United States addressed among others the challenge of development without putting into jeopardy the primary organisational mission. This organisation took into consideration the importance of local needs in the environment within which it was operating. This practice resembled contemporary social marketing practices. Voluntary organisations operations tend to seriously consider the importance of being aware and meeting the social needs of citizens. This orientation is closely related to their overall effectiveness. As already stated, the social marketer designs the appropriate programs by taking into consideration the needs and the attitudes of individuals to whom the programs will be addressed to.

In addition to the above, the challenge of development is closely related to the social character of Greek YWCA. As a women’s organisation, the Greek YWCA strove for the safeguarding of women’s rights and well-being throughout its history, and could be characterized in that sense as a learning organisation within which the development of shared visions about the organisations’ future existed (Senge, 1990). As such a learning organisation it faced the challenges of women’s work and political emancipation and the review of women’s role within the family and society at large. Today it is represented through the existence of local associations that seek to provide answers and solutions to the problems of the contemporary woman.

*“I believe that as far as social issues are concerned the Greek YWCA ought to design programs towards this direction. We have done it here in the past and it was successful... Women need what we are offering, but maybe we don't know how to offer it anymore. We have the right to change some things and to adjust them to the circumstances and to the needs of society.”* IN 8.2.

The findings of the interviews underlined, in various occasions, the need to preserve the character of a woman's organisation and further develop programs that aim at helping women to cope with today's societal challenges. Again, organisational learning is present through the need to commit to the purpose of the organisation, which entails responsiveness to membership's needs and encourages the alignment of services with the organisations' mission. The need to follow a successful transformation within the Greek YWCA was perfectly encapsulated in the following quotation:

*“We are resistant to change, because we are afraid that by changing we may change also the mission of our organisation. This is not our purpose...I think we are resistant to anything new. I recall a period when we thought that it was about time to start focusing on priority programs and leave everything else aside. And then we started quarrelling, on a friendly basis of course, with each other...You see the other programs brought us money. But I wonder whether this practice has altered the character of our organisation...”* G 18.

Moreover, the research findings underlined two major aspects of the current governing within the local centres of the Greek YWCA. The first one referred to the commonly cited “complaint” from the volunteers’ side that the heavy load of office work did not allow them to spend time on qualitative recruitment and empowerment of new members. Moreover, this complaint entailed the lack of professional support and training from headquarters in terms of financial and administrative management. The second aspect suggested that the local centres were forced to “sacrifice” the implementation of programs according to the priorities of the organisation because they experienced lack of creative time. Volunteers illustrated the aforementioned points by arguing that the time and the substantial effort they dedicate to the administrative and financial affairs of their centres does not leave them with time for the implementation of priority programs and the consequent education of the volunteers.

*“We run around for daily operational matters and lose the essence of volunteerism. My term at our local governing board expires now and I am not willing to renew it. We are consumed with daily obligations and this causes anxiety and distortion...This is a heavy load for only five persons. This is the reason that no one wishes to enter into the governing board. I prefer to engage myself in a priority program of YWCA.”* IN 11.1.

The literature review underlined, among other obstacles, the barriers of strict and impersonal operational regulations that do not favour inter-organisational communications as well as not discussing the un-discussable in order to maintain a balance of inter-relationships (Gill, 2010:15-26). The overall impact of the

aforementioned barriers did not help the adoption of organisational learning techniques within the Greek YWCA, since impersonal relationships and limited communication were causing questioning, reaction and disappointment to local branches volunteers. The findings of this research suggested that there is a gap between real and ideal when analyzing the support of the national presiding board to the local governing bodies. According to volunteers' responses, there was a strong feeling of negligence on behalf of the headquarters due to both practical and personal reasons. Most of the participants agreed that the support of the volunteers from the Greek YWCA's headquarters was an important determinant of their centres operation. The lack of maintaining good relationships with the local centres was criticized as a barrier to the overall development of the organisation. A volunteer stresses the aforementioned conclusion by referring to the lack of substantial support and empowerment.

*"...I don't wish to be misunderstood but our centre is not among the beloved ones of the National Board. There is no such thing like support to and communication with us. We wished to receive more often visits from the headquarters. Physically, not through letters...They said we did not do things in the correct way. We need training. Do you know whether long distance training can actually offer something to our members? And if we are doing something wrong, we are here ready to hear."* IN 1.5.

In view of the above, volunteers underlined the current situation within their local centres in order to explain why organisational change was conceived as a problem. Although the new requirements of the international World YWCA movement were considered as significant components for the development of their

organisation, volunteers stressed their inability to overcome the equally significant problems arising from the operation of their local centres. Highly influenced by the historical mission of the Greek YWCA and by their collective identity, volunteers expressed their experiences in order to create a sense of their organisational identity.

The next sub-chapter presents the views of the volunteers on the issue of overcoming the organisational change problem deriving from the international requirements of the World movement and affecting their local operation.

#### 7.4. Highlighting the volunteers' ways for overcoming the organisational change problem

According to the literature there are four processes whose operation results to organisational evolution (Aldrich, 1999). The first is the process of variation that occurs when people search for solutions to organisational problems. The second is the process of selection during which forces either external or internal to an organisation affect its routine operation. The third is the retention process whereby initial variations become standardized and institutionalized. Finally, the process of struggle refers to the struggle of becoming legitimized.

With regard to the variation process, the structure of Greek YWCA favours the spread of cumulative responsibility load by identifying the opportunities that all volunteers have in the management of the organisation. The working method of YWCA is based on a relationship between active local centres and professional headquarters. This relationship is a two-way relationship; volunteers seek to fulfil their personal needs for the pursuit of a noble common goal and headquarters provide

the method and the organisation for the fulfilment of this goal. The desired level of involvement is high for all the members that are able to offer their recommendations and suggest ways on how plans can be implemented. However, the associational challenges of governance, development and volunteer support have shown that the cumulative load, undertaken by the local governing boards, the low involvement level of the local centre representatives in the development of new programs and directives and the absence of commitment and avoidance of responsibilities, have resulted in the unequal distribution of power within Greek YWCA. This distribution of power raises the important impact of organisational learning. The organisational learning perspective that is grounded in social psychological and cognitive theories of the human behaviour, stresses the importance of observing the organisational conditions that allow people to control their organisational status. If the Greek YWCA succeeds in recognizing the importance of organisational learning to improve operational structuring, to equal division of labour and responsibilities, and to sharing of new knowledge, it will provide the grounds that will support and develop its local branches and their members. Nowadays, the limited resources and support from the national YWCA has stopped further development of the priority programs, projecting the demonstration of the social aspect of the organisation to society.

*“The YWCA failed to follow current developments. The national board consolidated its strength and power at the headquarters and closed its ears to the voices of local and community volunteers. The organisation gradually and totally lost its social face. Since they couldn’t hear their members, they failed to hear the voices of women in need.”* IN 19.5.

Concerning the selection process, the external forces that affect the operation of the Greek YWCA are the World YWCA and the new statutory framework of the Greek Voluntary Sector. The new constitutional amendment of following and implementing good standards of management and accountability entailed the future consideration of revoking the membership status of national associations that failed to comply with this new condition set forth by the World Council. Therefore, the impact of the new world strategic framework implied the need to consider drastic organisational changes within the Greek YWCA, in order to ensure its affiliation to the World YWCA.

Moreover and with respect to the standardization and institutionalization of initial variations, the way in which existing members target particular women for recruitment reflects not only the existing organisational culture but also a serious bias to preserve this culture. The orientation of current membership can produce significant changes in the Greek YWCA. In finding solutions, it is important to be aware of and take into account the specific characteristics of individuals that are a part of the total system. Attempts to ignore these characteristics can only lead to unsuccessful management change. The importance of volunteers' culture and perceptions was underlined during the presentation of the research's findings that suggested that the voluntary workforce has special needs and visions that need to be met. The major shift in the offered programs and services accompanied by the decrease in the number of registered volunteers, suggested that existing members did not find reasons either to continue or to invest in the recruitment and in the retention of new volunteers. The existing culture, organisation and orientation of the Greek YWCA's volunteers were pinpointed as the challenges that could eventually generate change. Furthermore, it was presumed that since the Greek YWCA adapted

successfully in the past to changes, it would not fail in adapting to contemporary challenges. The consideration of changes with regards to the identity of the organisation involves growing interest in the analysis of the characteristics of current membership. The emergence of a new orientation, that encompasses the idea of transforming an organisation, values the idea of considering individuals as important actors for the promotion of change.

*“In the past we received training in order to volunteer properly, you know... We used to gather the children of foreigners and immigrants and teach them Greek, organize small events for them...I was feeling a useful person in my community... I was helped psychologically. I don't know whether this is a YWCA priority, but this was the way that I experienced volunteerism in the past...” G 14.*

Finally, the issue of legitimacy refers to the adaptability of organisations to follow social developments and shape accordingly their way of working and operating in order to meet contemporary trends. A historical example of a similar change is the one of the World Council in 1975- the International Women's Year. The outcome of this Council represented a major shift in the organisation's orientation; matters of equality in education and employment were upgraded by means of equality in the decision- making processes. The organisation reflected on its past and rediscovered its identity. It reflected on its past and re-examined its orientation. It has been a women's movement based on Christian love and aimed at the improvement of women's status. As stated at the World Council, the YWCA recognized the need to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women in the exercise of their civil, political and social rights. And as a reformative social movement it aimed at the offset of



injustice and inequality. The organisation was changing, because the world around it was changing too. As stated by the 1955-1978 World YWCA General Secretary, Elizabeth Palmer, the association was capable in meeting the challenge of being responsive to the changing needs of women (Anon., 2000).

*“We forgot that we are a woman’s organisation. We felt that by offering four to five programs that met the priorities of the YWCA, everything would be ok....And then we wondered what went wrong...I believe that the problem concentrates on the following issue: we really don’t know our target group. We are a woman’s organisation that seeks to develop women. Maybe if we recall who we are, maybe we will find out what is wrong with our current organisation.” IN 6.2.*

#### *7.4.1. Addressing the international challenges*

As stated in the Strategic Framework of the World organisation, since YWCAs share the values of mutual respect, tolerance, diversity and inclusiveness, they seek to promote the development of young women’s leadership, adapt to standards of good management and accountability, and represent their associations at various regional and international organisations. Coming back, to Benford and Snow’s (2000:623-627) conceptualization in the emergence of a collective identity, the second process that they suggest concerns the strategic process that refers to the alignment of identity framing through the linking, idealization, and extension of major ideas in order to achieve specific purposes and goals like the acquisition of resources. Mc Adam and Scott (2002:15) recognized the relationship between organisational studies and social movements’ analysis and illustrated their growing convergence by constructing a framework within which they highlighted the parallel components

characterizing both the development of organisations and the emergence of social movements. The “governance structures” are the mechanisms that regulate the organisational mechanisms, and have a strong affinity to the framing processes that guide the proposed lines of action within social movements.

On the issue of compliance to the World YWCA standards of good management and accountability, the Greek YWCA volunteers favoured the hiring of paid staff that could undertake the management of operational tasks, in order to allow the volunteers to develop their daily activities in a more substantial and productive manner. Volunteers resisted administrative training, since they argued that they volunteered in order to meet their self-development aspirations and not to undertake responsibilities that required the sacrifice of their free time for the running of their local association. All the above testified the existence of blurring boundaries that can cause a sense of distortion within the organisation and especially among the members of the governing board that view themselves as volunteers and not as administrative unpaid staff.

On the issue of leadership development, the research findings corresponded also to the literature review assertion that leadership development is also an important component for the organisation of voluntary organisations. The overall volunteers’ perception on leadership and its development was highly influenced by their opinion about the current organisational situation within the Greek YWCA. Most of the volunteers interviewed alluded to the role of the head of the national presiding board, whose role was considered ambiguous. In addition, reasons that hindered the development of leadership underlined the role of the current organisational ways of operation that did not favour the sharing of responsibilities but that were characterized by centralization. The findings presented that volunteers opposed to the notion of a

manager and favoured instead the entity of a transformational leader that would produce positive change taking into consideration apart from the imposed regulations of order and consistency, the inspirational role of leadership. This opinion entitled, in turn, the traits of a charismatic leader in a voluntary organisation that entailed experience, tolerance and unification. Leadership was found to be consistent with the needs of membership unification. This finding was in line with the literature that stressed the importance of leadership skills in the framing process of social movements (Morris and Stagenburg, 2004:184) and in the promotion of unification and positive outcomes (Fantasia and Stepan-Norris, 2004:569-570).

*“The leader has to inspire and radiate. This is the only way to empower the tired voluntary workforce of the Greek YWCA.” G 14.*

In addition, literature on the issue of social movement leadership indicated a major influence on the organisation of voluntary agencies. Among others their major difference is the orientation on the issue of organisational change. Leadership produces positive change, whereas management produces order and consistency (Kotter, 1990:3-17; Zaleznik, 1977:126-135).

*“There are a lot of groups within the Greek YWCA. Some of them favour the old operations while others favour innovation; others want changes without knowing what and how to change. My view is that a successful future leader will be able to unite all these different stances and produce a new and healthy Greek YWCA. This person has to be educated and close to the organisation; but most of all she has to be tolerant.” IN 19.2.*

On the issue of the promotion of advocacy and social services, the findings of this study revealed the need of the volunteers to transform the Greek YWCA into a reformatory voluntary association that will aim at attracting members that are in need of the association's services. The data yielded two major practices that underlined the importance of offering: first, establishing tangible responses to women in need, and secondly, transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and supportive association.

*"We concentrate on the formal part and leave the essential outside. If the volunteers don't come to us, let us go out and search for them. In addition, let us show the sensitive side of the organisation outside. For example, find the mother of a prisoner and stand by her...give love. The serious face and the inflexibility of the organisation has brought us here...I envisage a new Greek YWCA with social orientation and offer."* IN 1.1.

The research findings revealed the need to strengthen support for women and therefore becoming an active partner of the Greek Women's Movement. In the past the support for vulnerable women was designed and offered through programs and services. The background history of the Greek YWCA testified among others a clear supportive role of women's needs. This role encapsulated the historical stance of older Greek YWCA volunteers that brought it forward during the conduct of interviews.

*"Maria Desylla was born in 1898 in Kerkyra. In 1956 she was elected municipal officer and head of the municipal council. In 1958 she won the municipal elections becoming thus the first woman ever elected Mayor in Greece. In addition, her offer in the social field was enormous. The Red Cross was her most important*

*field of action achieving her goals, through it. She greatly contributed in caring for injured people during the break of World War II, while in 1941 she was exiled along with her husband. For her time, she was a pioneer in founding Kerkyra's YWCA and helping women refugees."*

#### *YWCA Kerkyra*

#### *7.4.2. Addressing the national challenges*

According to the aforementioned Korten's three stage theory (1980:500), "learning to be efficient" refers to the consideration of linking the way of performing to the achievement of certain goals. Furthermore, the commitment to analysis and feedback that includes the formulation of strategies according to members' feedback, the inter-organisational dialogue and partnership and the emergence of facilitative and generative leadership can support the actions of organisations that seek their learning transformation (Gill, 2010:764). Perkins (2007) stresses also that the empowerment of volunteers through learning opportunities at the individual level can promote successfully second-order learning and transform an organisation. In particular, Perkins (2007:322) suggests that organisational staff and volunteers ought to reflect on how to analyze the power relationships that characterize the decision-making processes. The discharge of responsibilities' of the governing board, the developmental alterations in the current way of working, and the active support of the volunteers were considered by the interviewed as the factors that could generate change at the associational level in the Greek YWCA.

The review of the literature suggested that change within voluntary organisations can also produce a sense of frustration, especially in the cases where agencies want to keep close to their missions and activities and don't risk altering their goals in the pursuit of obtaining further resources or more volunteers. Furthermore, the challenge of change entails also the further challenge of growth. Due to competition or to changes of local authorities' priorities, agencies feel the need to surpass their current state and work towards the commercialization of their organisation. Nevertheless, the latter can weaken the influence of the governing body, reduce the number of volunteers and make the network of social relationships within the community less stable. The voluntary sector's sustainability is currently strengthened by its dedication to the fulfillment of local community needs and the support of the local voluntary associations. Moreover, the potential weaknesses of the past, that showed a resistance of grassroots associations to innovation and technology, are being replaced by an interest to reinforce the mutual communication of local organisations with the external environment. By facing the challenges of effective governing and of developing new ways of working, the Greek YWCA would be able to both sustain the important role of its local centres governing boards, and via communication, encourage the adoption of new techniques in the way of functioning.

The reviewed challenges and learning resistances of associational organisations resemble those faced by local YWCA branches: keeping the balance of members and organisation's needs when setting priorities, planning activities, and managing paid and voluntary staff. Furthermore, the challenge of developing an effective governing body (Rochester, 2000:30) is especially influential for small agencies, where the informal relationship between the members may lead to the absence of strong commitments and responsibilities. In addition, governance can be

an especially difficult task for the small community groups and organisations when faced with the challenge of meeting several and different requirements. The combination of program and membership Harris's (1991) work on the role of voluntary management committees, showed that the roles of the governing body are interdependent with other organisational roles, and that there are differences in the perceptions of the staff, the members and the governing board, of who should be doing what in the organisation.

The above gave theoretical grounds to Rochester's theory (1999:5) that states that "One size, does not fit all", by identifying four kinds of volunteers' involvement in voluntary organisations: the service delivery model, that describes a high level of volunteers' involvement and the professional support of paid staff, the support role model, that describes volunteers' work as supportive and supplementing to that of the paid staff, the member activist model, according to which all operations are run by volunteers and the co-worker model, where there are no clear boundaries between the roles of volunteers and professional paid staff. According to the findings of this research, the members of the local branches favoured the service delivery model that could support the work of the governing board, whose major duty was the selection of programs for attracting volunteers. Members acknowledged the important role of the paid staff and expressed the will to even hire another one, if possible. They felt comfort in having a person taking care of the daily issues of their centres.

*"We need staff that has the knowledge to address the problems arising from the application of priority programs. These problems can be either financial, or administrative and operational. There are special people for this kind of jobs. They have studied it and know how to work things out. They don't have to work full-time."*

Respectively and according, once more, to the example of a successful organisational change, the transformation of the Young Men's Christian Association, change of organisational goals is attributed to four main factors (Powell and Friedkin, 1987:187). The first factor is that the YMCA supported the role and the work of lay volunteers. The YMCA, influenced by its historical reliance on the work of volunteers, continued to rely on the horizontal integration of lay volunteers in the delivery of services. The retention of volunteers was considered as a strategic decision in order to support and sustain their committed services (Clary, Sinder and Ridge, 1992:345-346) by becoming centralized and acquiring the development of a supportive professional body.

Finally, and on the crucial issue of recruitment and retention of new volunteers, the current voluntary workforce stressed the importance of taking onto consideration the needs and opinions of potential new members. The literature review evaluated the demand and supply of participation to social movements, by analyzing the dynamics of each one, according to the time and effort involved components. In particular, the demand side of participation is highly influenced by feelings of deprivation, inequality and injustice that motivate people to belong to a certain group and mobilize them to express these emotions, whereas the supply side of participation entails the communication of needed changes that mobilize the supporters, the identification of demands among groups of people, and the construction of processes through which demands are projected (Klandermans, 2004). Benford and Snow's third process of building a collective identity is the contested process that stresses the



tension between the frames and the actual events of collective action. The different attitude of the volunteers, influenced by the general decline of volunteerism within their centres, was critical of the Greek YWCA's current implementation of priority programs and emphasized the need of the volunteers to feel that they are actually offering something to their communities. The implementation of national priority programs was considered ambiguous in its purpose; the volunteers actually did not know why they were volunteering. Being formerly assisting members in their organisation, they envisaged a more active role in the YWCA. The interview data yielded two major practices that underlined the importance of offering: first, establishing tangible responses for women in need and second, transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and supportive association. Participants criticized the current orientation of the programs and proposed the inter-dependence of educational theory and action within the Greek YWCA. One volunteer described this situation as follows:

*"...I'll give you an example of what I am talking about. While attending to the Book Group, I envisaged that at the end of the sessions and discussion we would all gather around and decide how we could transform our knowledge into action. And the result was that: we read the book; we discussed about the book and then started a new book. No action, no mobilization. As if we were attending a reading class...That's what is missing: social action and response to the practical needs of the contemporary woman."* IN 6.2.

In view of the above, volunteers highlighted the way in which actions for the transformation of their association can be undertaken. Local and national governance

constituted the major components that could eventually support the new actions of the Greek YWCA.

#### 7.5. Defining organisational change within the Greek Young Women's Christian Association

Consistent with the literature, the collective identity of the volunteers can indeed constitute an internal and institutional source of change. Social movements can be transformative and aim at changing the total social structure by often using violent practices, reformatory concentrate on partial changes in an attempt to offset injustices and inequalities, redemptive by arguing that individuals' problems are isolated from their social context and involve the individuals' well being within the changing global environment, and finally they can be alternative and support sustainable alternative lifestyles and reject materialism and unconventional lifestyles (Cohen and Rai, 2000:2).

The aforementioned sub-chapters described the contemporary cultural identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce, analyzed the volunteers' views about the organisational change issues set forth by the headquarters' policies of the Greek and the World YWCA, and highlighted the ways by which volunteers perceive the overcoming of the organisational change processes.

The new definition of change within the Greek YWCA is developed according to the outcomes of three processes that correspond to the unification of volunteers' common experiences, the linkage of the new organisational requirements, and the generation of new ideas, and is the following:

Organisational change in the voluntary sector is the contribution of volunteers' collective identity to the transformation of a voluntary organisation.

#### *7.5.1. The unification of common experiences*

This research highlighted the importance of uncovering the experiences, ideas and beliefs of the volunteers in order to explain the meanings that volunteers attributed to the social events that characterized their organisation.

The literature review defined the development of frames within social movements like the “building or picture frame” that depicts a part of the world and holds this part together (Ryan and Gamson, 2006:14). In the same sense the experiences of the Greek YWCA volunteers are put within a frame that links these experiences and provides underlying ideas and beliefs about essential organisational processes and problems.

The analysis of the findings provided useful grounds for the argument of unifying the experiences of the volunteers, since it was these experiences that could actually shape the outcome of any organisational change by rejecting certain practices that were not in accordance with their perception and by welcoming processes that could aid the operation of their local centres.

Accordingly, volunteers stressed the importance of fulfilling their emotional needs while volunteering and anticipated that new volunteers would find exactly the same reasons for engaging to the local centres of the Greek YWCA. In addition, based on their own past experiences and drawing from the history of the Greek YWCA, the

volunteers referred explicitly to the past social orientation of the organisation that actually offered tangible solutions to women in need.

Therefore, volunteers underlined the characteristics of their collective identity that were the essential role of their personal development and fulfilment as volunteers and their need of providing actual social offering to women in their local society.

#### *7.5.2. The linkage of the new organisational requirements*

The perceptions of volunteers on matters of accountability and partnership, suggested in the documents of the World and Greek YWCA reviews, charters and legislative recommendations, indicated that the members of the local centres recognized the significance of the new system of priorities that could eventually affect the affiliation of the Greek YWCA to the World Movement.

This process refers to the acquaintance of the volunteers with the new standards of working, performing and achieving, within the movement of the Young Women's Organisation. The review of the legislative statements, constitution and annual reports to the World YWCA revealed that the current orientation of the Greek YWCA did not coincide with the global orientation of the movement and that the notions of accountability and partnership were understood in a different manner and interpreted from a different point of view, or exercised in their own way. The World YWCA movement aims to promote advocacy and representation of women at national and international events through the partnership of the YWCA volunteers with other national and international organisations. Women are not only urged to access information and resources but also to contribute to the building of knowledge.

Thus, despite the acknowledgement of the importance of the standards of good management and accountability by the members of the Greek YWCA, the significant asymmetric information problem concerning the role of the World YWCA caused feelings of mistrust and discomfort. Volunteers questioned the way in which the Greek YWCA was directed or influenced by the World YWCA and its priorities; they questioned this relationship by posing the question whether the World YWCA was a partner or a patron. The volunteers felt that the power of their local associations was reduced as they entered into the franchise age of the voluntary sector and therefore they were suspicious of any kind of new cooperation.

The aforementioned questioning uncovered the volunteers' perceptions concerning the burdens of the local centres' operational structures that hindered the adaptation to new ways of working within the World YWCA movement. Concerning the governance of the local branches, the overall viewpoint, underlined the two major aspects of current governance as it was perceived by the respondents. The first referred to the commonly cited "complaint" from the volunteers' side that the heavy load of office work did not allow them to spend time on qualitative recruitment and empowerment of new members. Support from headquarters was underlined as an important issue. The second aspect suggested that local centres were forced to "sacrifice" the implementation of programs, according to the priorities of the organisation, because they experienced lack of creative time. Instead of organizing and offering programs and services according to the priorities of national YWCA, the boards decided to implement programs that fulfilled the needs and wishes of their serving members. In addition, this decision was influenced more by the fact that desirable programs yielded more revenue for local branches.

The linkage of the new organisational requirements is the process during which volunteers acknowledge the significance of organisational change and uncover the reasons for which organisational change is a difficult process in their local centres.

#### *7.5.3. The generation of new ideas*

The last process of change is the process during which volunteers propose ways for overcoming their operational problems while addressing the international and national organisational challenges.

Interviewees expressed their ideas for facing the associational challenges of their local centres from a different perspective than the current one. They experienced high levels of anxiety and discomfort for being left alone and without support during a difficult phase; they favoured changing their mode of working by identifying the current disadvantages in the way governance operates and rules. In addition, they acknowledged that currently offered programs were not as popular and successful as those offered by other organisations. In addition, the burden of limited resources for renting new spaces or renovating houses and apartments that were owned or were the responsibility of the local branches was highlighted as an important challenge. Volunteers expressed their concern that unwelcoming and old-fashioned lodges were acting as constraints for the attraction of new volunteers and inhibited the improvement of working conditions.

However, induced by developments on issues of accountability and their relation to funding possibilities, and in the matters of co-operation and their relation to the evolution and expansion of the organisation, volunteers underlined the need to

obtain more information about their organisational challenges and in the way that the adoption of new practices would ensure their continued and inhibited operation in Greece. The analysis of the findings lead to the conclusion that the local branches of the Greek YWCA needed the strong and substantial support of the organisation in order to move on and change. The anticipated contribution of the Greek YWCA's president and the presiding board focused on four major components: the conscientious and accountable running of the organisation, the frequent communication with the base, the designation of training and supportive facilities and the empowerment of local centre volunteers.

The volunteers of the Greek YWCA proposed ways for overcoming the current challenges that the organisation was facing by aligning their collective identity through the extension and generation of new ideas. Therefore, the hiring of the professional staff that could undertake the management of operational tasks according to the new standards of management and accountability, and that could allow volunteers to engage themselves into more substantial social voluntary work by the implementation of the World movement's priorities, was considered as the generation of an idea based always on the experiences and beliefs of volunteers.

Therefore, the generation of new ideas referred to the importance of the collective identity of volunteers while preparing strategies that would aim at the advanced and effective organisation of the Greek YWCA.

## 7.6. Conclusion

The theories of organisational learning and social movements have provided useful insight into the phenomenon of organisational change within the Greek YWCA. In particular, the theoretical framework of the collective identities facilitated the interpretation of the research findings and helped in understanding how volunteers estimated the significance of the organisational change problem and how they perceived the ways in which this problem may be overcome.

The findings regarding the determinants for participating to the activities of the Greek YWCA were consistent with the collective identity theory that underlined the impact of personal experiences and emotions in the orientation of volunteers. On the basis on their personal experiences and in accordance with the organisational mission of the Greek YWCA, the contemporary workforce eulogized the reasons for joining the local centres of the YWCA and acknowledged the need to change.

The aforementioned acknowledgement offered useful grounds in explaining the significance of the international requirements for change with particular reference to the operation of the Greek YWCA local centres. In their effort to comply with the new standards of operation, the volunteers emphasized also the daily operational obstacles that hindered the compliance to these requirements. Therefore, the volunteers recognized the existence of their inability to adapt to good standards of management and accountability, to promote leadership, and to foster advocacy and empowered representation, since they faced associational problems that influenced the daily operation of the local centres and that hindered the recruitment and retention of new volunteers.



In addition to the above illustration of the organisational change problem, volunteers highlighted the ways in which they perceived the overcoming of the challenges that they were facing. The discharge of local volunteers from the heavy burden of daily and routine operational duties and the support by professional staff were underlined as the answers to the problems of changing. The Greek YWCA volunteers highlighted their willingness to engage into the advocacy and supportive role of the organisation by promoting the priority programs of the YWCA and by covering their emotional need of actual social offering.

In view of the above, the new definition of change within the Greek YWCA is developed according to the outcomes of three processes that correspond to the unification of volunteers' common experiences, the linkage of the new organisational requirements, and the generation of new ideas: *Organisational change in the voluntary sector is the contribution of volunteers' collective identity to the transformation of a voluntary organisation.* The experiences, values and beliefs of the volunteers are the components that constitute the cultural identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce, which in turn highlights the significance and the overcoming of the organisational change problem.

The following chapter, chapter eight, provides an overview of this research, evaluates the contributions of this study to knowledge, examines the limitations of the case study of the Greek YWCA, and finally includes suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 8: Concluding Remarks**

### **8.1. Introduction**

The primary aim of this research was to explore the phenomenon of change within the voluntary sector. This study reviewed, in chapters two and three, the major theoretical foundations of the organisational learning and social movement's theories, used the collective identities theory as the theoretical framework of analysis with particular reference to the findings concerning the Greek YWCA that were presented in chapters five and six and which reached at a new definition of change.

This chapter provides an overview of this research in section 8.2., evaluates the contributions of this study to knowledge in section 8.3., examines the limitations of the case study of the Greek YWCA in section 8.4., and finally includes some suggestions for further research in section 8.5. .

### **8.2. Overview of this research**

The literature review in chapters two and three showed that existing organisational learning and social movements' theories aided the explanation of the organisational change phenomenon in the voluntary sector. However, previous investigations focused on the dilemmas of organisational growth, funding, co-operation and competition. This study added a fourth dilemma that could bring voluntary organisations to the cross-roads of change. This research argued that a missing ingredient of the

theory of organisational change in the voluntary sector is the consideration of the volunteers' voices and standpoints, that voluntary organisations fail to hear and meet; voices and standpoints that can promote and influence organisational changes.

The case study of an organisation was decided as the adoptive research design that could provide insights into the phenomenon of change and describe the tensions and dilemmas arising from the international and national set of expectations of the Greek YWCA.

The research findings revealed that the opinions, views and experiences of the Greek YWCA's volunteers did not coincide in their totality with the new orientation of the World YWCA that underlined the need for inclusion, young leadership and global presence. The new goals of the World YWCA stressed the importance of leadership development, transnational maintenance of good standards of management and accountability, and the building of an advisory and service-model organisation. However, on the issue of leadership development the Greek volunteers stressed the influence of the current organisational operations that hindered the development of leadership with the Greek YWCA. Furthermore, volunteers resisted the administrative responsibilities and the management of their local centres by arguing that they volunteered in order to achieve their self-development. Finally, volunteers questioned the way in which the organisational mission of the YWCA movement was served through the currently offered programs in Greece. The data underlined the importance of transforming from a purely informative to an advisory and service-model organisation if the aims of World YWCA were to be fulfilled.

The declining number of registered volunteers in the Greek YWCA was linked to the current orientation of the organisation that was considered blurring and without concrete aim and scope towards the provision of answers to women's contemporary challenges. Therefore, the contemporary association does not attract potential active members that could aid the development of the organisations' programs. In addition, the members recognized too their inability to attract and retain new and young volunteers because of the adoption of old-fashioned ways of working. The old buildings and apartments that hosted local branches activities, created also a sense of frustration as their maintenance required a lot of work and care. Nevertheless, volunteers were opposed to any kind of change concerning their mission and essence of existence; they favoured development and opposed transformation. Finally, according to the volunteer responses, there was a deep feeling of negligence of the headquarters due to both practical and personal reasons. The anticipated contribution of the president and the presiding board focused on four major components: conscious and accountable running of the organisation, frequent communication with the basis, designation of training and supportive facilities and the empowerment of the local centre's volunteers.

The definition of organisational change proposed in this thesis combines the thematic material drawn from the organisational learning and social movements' theories. In particular, the collective identities or framing theory is used as the theoretical framework that presents and explains the model that reflects the actual changes that are taking place within the Greek YWCA. The collective identities or framing theory explains social movements' emergence according to the common culture

that the movements' members share. The culture of the members, which is the collection of beliefs, values and ideologies, influences both the illustration of a problem's significance and the highlighting of the ways in which a problem may be overcome.

In the case of the Greek YWCA and in the light of a new definition of change, this thesis describes the contemporary cultural identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce, analyses the volunteers' views about the organisational change issues set forth by the headquarters' policies of the Greek and the World YWCA, and highlights the ways in which volunteers perceive the overcoming of the organisational change processes.

The new definition of change within the voluntary sector is developed according to the outcomes of three processes that correspond to the unification of the volunteers' common experiences, the linkage of new organisational requirements, and the generation of new ideas. Organisational change in the voluntary sector is the contribution made by the volunteers' collective identity to the transformation of a voluntary organisation.

### 8.3. Evaluation of the research's contributions

Although this thesis does not provide an integrated theory of organisational change in the voluntary sector, it provides a new definition of change based on the example of the Greek YWCA.

This study is the first which undertakes an empirical investigation regarding organisational change in Greek voluntary organisations. Taking

into consideration the new professional standards required by the World YWCA and the contracting of the welfare state due to the economic crisis in Greece, this contemporary investigation contributes to the better functioning of voluntary organisations by providing useful information about how they face the challenge of change. There is a need for a new research agenda to provide knowledge for the selection and implementation of any governmental policies for the operation of the third, non-governmental or voluntary sector. The forces that have an impact on the organisation are useful indications for an envisaged governmental body that will aid the substantial operation of voluntary organisations.

The in-depth examination and the analysis of the qualitative data resulted in useful information on the processes that organisations employ in order to adapt or resist to change. By employing the case study strategy, this research aimed to facilitate the designation of a future proposal for the application of the study's findings on the Greek YWCA. In addition, the research findings and the employed methodological procedures will provide some advice, additional knowledge and further application to any other similar research in the voluntary sector.

The proposed definition of organisational change within the voluntary sector aims to contribute to the theory that views voluntary organisations as distinct and multidimensional entities resembling, but at the same time differing from, business and governmental agencies. The current thinking and theorizing of organisational change by referring to the challenges of professional innovations in the voluntary sector on the one hand, and to the adoption of strategies for the establishment of these innovations on the other hand, does not extensively refer to the explicit

reasons lying behind this resistance; reasons that refer to the significance of the volunteers' perceptions and voices. This study considers the volunteers' collective voice and standpoint that voluntary organisations fail to hear and meet; a collective voice and standpoint that sketches the collective identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce and that can promote organisational changes.

#### 8.4. Examination of the Greek YWCA case study's limitations

Qualitative research should be evaluated by the criterion of "trustworthiness" that refers to four concepts; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Guba and Lincoln 1985:290). Credibility refers to the truthfulness and authenticity of the research findings. Transferability and dependability refer to the application of specific findings to other research cases. Conformability is the neutrality of the researcher. The fulfilment of the aforementioned criteria depends on the application of specific techniques that respond to the methodology strategy of the research. Morse and Spiers (2008:13) argue that "...qualitative researchers should reclaim responsibility and validity by implementing verification strategies integral and self-correcting during the conduct of inquiry itself". These strategies need to meet the following criteria:

- a. the methodological coherence that entails the research strategy and method interdependence*

This research aimed at developing a research strategy that would represent the ontological and epistemological basis of the thesis and at the same time ensure validity and reliability of findings accordingly by applying the facilitation approach in the use of methods. Organisations were perceived as meaningful components of the social world. The distinctive features and challenges of organisations suggest that organisational social reality has an objective existence which can be explained by examining the meaning that social actors attribute to its existence. Therefore, the broad research area of the thesis's topic suggested that the function of organisations also depends on the actions of the individuals that take place in particular institutional contexts. The approach of this research represents the critical realist social paradigm. The critical realist case study is considered an appropriate approach for "relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organisations, inter-organisational relationships or nets of connected organisations" (Easton, 2010:118). Influenced by the social theory of critical realism, this study endorsed the idea that any facts and events observed may depend on repeated patterns and structural order but they are not determined solely by it. In other words, social phenomena are not always obvious and they can be generated, described and explained by uncovering the various underlying social structures and mechanisms that influence them. The examination and explanation of these underlying structures and mechanisms required the employment of a qualitative research strategy that included interviewing, as well as the supplementary methods of the analysis of my personal notes and of the Greek YWCA's official documents, and research observations that



aimed at the examination of the Greek YWCA case study through different angles and that have provided rich descriptions on how specific events and challenges are generated by volunteers' external and internal interactions.

*b. sufficiency of sample and data that account for all the different aspects of this research topic*

To meet the research objectives, purposive or judgmental as well as snowballing sample techniques were used. This research entailed visits to nineteen out of the twenty-seven local centres of the Greek YWCA. Seven of them were located around Athens, five in Thessaloniki and the rest all over Greece. The agenda for each visit was designed according to the schedule of the volunteers and included interviews, observations of the local centres governing board meetings, attendance to various social events and observation of the volunteers' everyday activities. The case study of the Greek YWCA was performed by integrating the principal research method of semi-structured interviewing and the supplementary methods of participant observation, and organisational and life documents' analysis. The methods of observation and documents' analysis helped in gaining access into the natural settings of the Greek YWCA local associations, yielded important material concerning the local centres' history and operation, identified key volunteers that were purposefully chosen to be interviewed, and enriched the findings of the interviews' analysis with more data.

*c. concurrent collection and analysis of data; maintenance of interaction between collection and analysis*

The problems of case analysis were reduced by distinguishing between note-taking and narrative writing, by tabulating meaningful events and by building explanations. Furthermore, analysis was conceived as a continuous process and in constant relationship with data collection. Since this research was concerned more with an in-depth rather than a wide analysis of data, qualitative methods were used for the analysis of data. Data was interpreted according to the cross-sectional and category indexing that underlined the pattern similarities found in the cross-national study of the Greek YWCA, and to the contextual, case study or holistic data organisation and explanatory logic that formed the analysis of the case study Greek YWCA according to the research objective (Mason, 2002: 150-168). The important themes and categories of the findings were compared with the existing thematic material of the literature review.

*d. theoretical thinking; theoretical and literal replication and theory development; a logical, comprehensive and informed theory.*

According to Whetten (1989:490-495), the building blocks or essential elements that contribute to the development of theory provide answers to the following four questions.

- i. the “what” question that addresses the consideration of useful factors for the explanation of a phenomenon
- ii. the “how” question that concerns the interrelation and linkage between useful factors
- iii. the “why” question that uncovers the dynamics that justify the collection and interrelation of useful factors
- iv. and finally, the “who, when, where” questions that set the context and the boundaries of generalization.

This research aimed at answering the main issue of exploration which is the views and perceptions of volunteers on the problem of the international driven need for organisational change at a local level and with particular reference to the Greek YWCA, by providing insights into the aforementioned four questions in the following way

- i. The review of the research findings supported the idea that the explanation of the phenomenon under investigation required the consideration of the collective identity of the Greek YWCA voluntary workforce. This identity influenced the process of organisational change by signifying the World YWCA international set of expectations. In addition, it

highlighted ways for addressing the organisational challenges through the development and support of the local centres.

- ii. The aforementioned factor produced the theoretical framework of analysis by examining the collective identity's impact on the organisational change. The examination and explanation of the organisational expectations and the volunteers' perceptions allowed access to the different layers of reality – individual, interactive or associational, and institutional or organisational- the examination of behaviours and actions of people and the impact of those actions and behaviours on the generation of events in each of these layers. Therefore, the way, for example, in which volunteers questioned the role of the required standards of good management set forth by the World YWCA, was linked to the current events characterizing the local centres whose representatives stressed their inability to conform to the current trends of professionalism.
- iii. The rationale behind the selection of the collective identities' theoretical framework can be found in the designation of this case study research strategy that accounts for the decisions taken before, during and after the conduct of research. As already stated, critical realism was the theory behind this research strategy. In line with the stated epistemological and

ontological considerations, this research attempted to solve an intellectual puzzle by exploring the possible influence of a crucial factor in the realization of organisational change. The argument seeks to identify the effect of this influence by adopting at the same time a major premise of critical realism that states that knowledge is open to adjustment. In addition, the theory of critical realism also reflected the “why” question in the following way: among other implications, critical realism highlights the explanation of people’s interactions by reference to the underlying structures observed in each social setting and contributes to the overall conduct of research by building bridges

between two epistemological approaches (May, 2001). The first one is rationalism, which favours the mathematical and formal reasoning in the production of knowledge, and the second is empiricism, which states that the sources of knowledge are the outcome of individuals’ perceptions. These bridges can, in effect, provide the basis for the generation of substantial knowledge in real world research.

- iv. The contextual element is included in the various parts of this research. First of all, the Greek YWCA is a women’s organisation whose evolution was in close relationship with the evolution of the Greek Voluntary Sector and the Greek Women’s Movement. Second, the Greek YWCA is an

affiliated member of the World YWCA and participates in the decision-making process of this international organisation. At the same time it is expected to conform to the strategic framework and the organisations' priorities that are voted on by the majority of the affiliated members of the World YWCA. Finally, the Greek YWCA links twenty-seven local centres throughout Greece. Members of these centres meet challenges that are analyzed and synthesized in order to represent the challenge of change in the Greek YWCA.

#### 8.5. Recommendations for further research

This present thesis should be considered as an exploratory study of organisational change. In particular, the aim was to explore what the concept of organisational change is, how it occurs in practice within the Greek YWCA, and what are the possibilities of offering a new definition by taking into consideration the role and influence of the volunteers' collective identity. Since this exploratory study does not cover all the related subjects at the same level of detail and since some ideas emerging from this exploratory effort need further testing, this section provides some recommendations for further research.

This research envisages acting as a benchmark in the research area of the World YWCA. However, more research is needed on the potential of doing case studies in order to inform World YWCA practitioners about the actual organisational changing processes that occur within the local

associations. A comparison between the organisational challenges of the Greek YWCA and those of other World YWCA country- members could enhance the validation of the findings in this study and help the World YWCA policy makers to design their future strategies.

Furthermore, this study investigated the characteristics of the current voluntary workforce and therefore focused more on the perceptions of the volunteers and not on the needs of the members that are served at the various local centres. An understanding of the needs of the current and potential members and their comparison to the services provided could highlight the possible future orientations of the organisation and address also the issue of relationship between the users and the volunteers.

Finally, this study emphasized the role of the internationally driven need for change, and its perception by the volunteers at a local level. Volunteers commented on changes that were imposed by the World YWCA, and questioned their effect at a national level. A future study could examine a vice-versa influence by investigating whether the need for changes at the local level could produce a relevant outcome at the international level. Especially, the consideration of the Greek YWCA volunteers' collective identity and its influence on the significance and outcome of organisational change could provide useful insights into the importance of the culture of volunteers in the transformation and generation of new ideas.

## **APPENDIX**



**ETHICS BOARD**

***RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM***

**Title and brief description of Research Project:**

Organizational Change in the Voluntary Sector: The Case Study of the YWCA (Young Women Christian Association) in Greece:

The aim of the research project is to examine and explain the “sources” of Organizational Change and explore the ways in which a voluntary organization could adapt successfully to these changes.

The purpose of this interview is to examine the organizational challenges faced by the local branches of the YWCA.

**Name and status of Investigator: Isidora- Davidoula Mytilinaiou**

**Research student**

**Consent Statement:** I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation, please raise this with the investigator or with the Dean of School (or equivalent), who is:

Name: Dr Philippa Hankinson

Contact Address: Roehampton University, Southlands College, School of Business and Social Sciences, Roehampton Lane, London SW 15 5PH

Direct Phone No: 020 8392 3722

Email: p.hankinson@roehampton.ac.uk

**ETHICS BOARD**

***PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION CONSENT FORM***

**Title and brief description of Research Project:**

Organizational Change in the Voluntary Sector: The Case Study of the YWCA (Young Women Christian Association) in Greece:

The aim of the research project is to examine and explain the “sources” of Organizational Change and explore the ways in which a voluntary organization could adapt successfully to these changes. Purpose of the “participant observation” research method: Observe the volunteers when performing their daily duties and listen to what is said in conversations of the governance board.

**Name and status of Investigator: Isidora- Davidoula Mytilinaiou**

**Research student**

**Consent Statement/ Head of Local YWCA Branch:** I agree to give access to our organization’s settings as well as permission to attend to our board meetings and to conduct interviews with volunteers within our local branch. I understand that the information provided will be treated in confidence by the investigator.

Name .....

Local Branch.....

Signature .....

Date .....

Please note: if you have any further concerns, please raise this with the investigator or with the Dean of School (or equivalent), who is:

Name: Dr Philippa Hankinson

Contact Address: Roehampton University, Southlands College, School of Business and Social Sciences, Roehampton Lane, London SW 15 5PH

Direct Phone No: 020 8392 3722 Email: p.hankinson@roehampton.ac.uk

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